

EU remains committed to helping Jordan — Gazzo

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordanian-European Union (EU) partnership agreement, recently initiated in Malta, is not directed against Jordanian firms but rather will serve their interests as it will those of the Kingdom, head of the Delegation of the European Commission in Jordan, Yves Gazzo, said Saturday.

The EU is ready to provide support for Jordanian firms to help increase their exports to Europe and improve the quality of national products, he explained.

In a press briefing at his residence marking Europe Day, Mr. Gazzo stated that thanks to the policies of His Majesty King Hussein, the Kingdom is attracting investments and its stable democracy reflects a bright image to the international community.

With reference to the situation in the occupied Arab territories, Mr. Gazzo said that the EU does not recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and will not transfer European embassies to Arab Jerusalem as long as the Holy City remains an occupied territory.

The EU cannot accept a monopoly on holy places as these places belong to the three monotheistic religions, he added.

Partial security cannot contribute a just and lasting solution to the Middle East crisis, Mr. Gazzo maintained, underlining the

importance of a broad regional security based on mutual cooperation.

The EU, he continued, is most willing to aid in the achievement of a comprehensive peace.

He described the regional situation as in serious crisis, which he attributed to the Israeli decision to build a settlement on Jabal Abu Ghneim in Arab East Jerusalem.

"A most crucial situation is facing the peace process," he maintained. "And the EU will continue to proffer ideas and proposals to the parties concerned and coordinate positions with the United States."

The EU, he said, demands that the parties remain committed to the implementa-

tion of the Oslo and Hebron accords and accelerate efforts to arrive at a permanent solution.

Mr. Gazzo said that the EU has suggested new ideas for the resumption of negotiations on the Israeli-Syrian and the Israeli-Lebanese tracks calling for a complete Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories in exchange for guarantees of full security.

He stressed that the proposals have been welcomed by Syria, Lebanon and the Israelis and are currently under these parties' examination.

Mr. Gazzo announced Friday that the EU is granting Jordan \$66 million to help implement its economic reform programme.



PALESTINIAN INTERNATIONAL BANK STARTS OPERATIONS: A Palestinian employee on Saturday demonstrates an advanced computer system at the opening of the Palestine International Bank (PIB) headquarters in the West Bank town of Ramallah. PIB will extend services by the end of 1997 to Gaza and Nablus, Hebron, Bethlehem and Tulikarem by 1999 (AFP photo)

Yemen takes monetary moves to revive economy

SANAA (IR) — Yemen's central bank on Saturday cut interest rates on bank deposits and allowed banks to offer foreign currency facilities as part of efforts to revive its economy following international reforms.

The central bank lowered to 14 per cent the minimum interest rate on deposits and left it to banks to decide interest rates on loans, a central bank official told Reuters.

Islands banks, who do not deal with interest — the core of Western banking system — as it is regarded by Islam as usury, were exempted from the latter decision.

Previously, interest rates on three-month, six-month, nine-month and one-year deposits were fixed at 20 per cent, 21 per cent, 21.5 per cent and 22 per cent respectively while interest rates on savings were set at 20 per cent.

The official, who requested anonymity, said the central bank also allowed commercial banks to extend foreign currency loans and other facilities regardless of their volumes provided they gained central bank approval.

Foreign currency facilities were previously banned. "These measures aim to boost the economy by reactivating the role of banks as financial intermediaries and through taking part in financing the process of development which is the basis of the next phase of economic reforms," he said.

Yemeni officials have said their economy is improving while central bank assets had risen with reforms introduced in 1995 in agreement with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

Israel probes death of Palestinian

TEL AVIV (R) — Israeli police said Saturday they were investigating the killing of a Palestinian accused of selling land in Jews, an activity the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) said is punishable by death.

Police spokesman Shmuelik Ben-Ruby said Palestinian security forces Saturday handed over the body of East Jerusalem land dealer Farid Bashiti to Israeli authorities for forensic tests.

Bashiti, 70, was found dead in Palestinian National Authority (PNA)-ruled Ramallah Friday. Palestinian security sources said Bashiti was discovered bound and with signs of a blow to the head by a sharp object. Family members said Bashiti's skull was fractured.

"He was a collaborator and a dealer of lands who used to sell lands to Israelis," a Palestinian security official who

refused to be identified told Reuters.

The PNA said this week it would apply the death sentence to Palestinians or their agents who sold land to Israelis in order to halt expansion of Jewish settlement on lands Israel seized in 1967.

Israeli security sources accused Palestinian security forces of luring Bashiti to an East Jerusalem hotel and kidnapping him.

"We are investigating two possibilities — that he was killed for selling land to Jews and because of a dispute," police spokesman Shmuelik Ben Ruby told Reuters.

"Bashiti was meant to meet a woman at the ambassador hotel. It is possible he didn't arrive," Mr. Ben-Ruby said. He said police were checking if Palestinian agents had operated in Jerusalem in violation of interim Israeli-PLO peace deals. Bashiti's family did not

assign blame for the killing.

"My lost father is an innocent victim which could be resulting from a property personal conflict translated into a national issue," Bashiti's son Mohammad Bashiti told reporters.

"Whoever defends his money and land and dies deceitfully at midnight is a martyr," he said.

Palestinian security sources and PNA officials denied any connection to Bashiti's killing.

But Palestinian Justice Minister Fathi Abu Meddein said any Arab who sold to Jews lands Israel occupied in the 1967 Middle East war was a "traitor" deserving "severe" punishment.

"As I have said before, expect the unexpected for these matters, because nobody from this moment will accept any traitor who sells his land to Israelis," Mr. Abu Meddein told Reuters.

King-Netanyahu meeting discuss airport, trade

(Continued from page 1)

will be signed soon."

On trade between Jordan and the Palestinians, the minister said "Israel responded positively to Jordanian demands to remove all obstacles that impede the flow of goods to the Palestinian self-rule areas."

He said these obstacles were caused by Israeli security inspection and the two sides agreed to hold high level tripartite meeting to discuss facilitating trade with the West Bank.

Last week, in a meeting with Jordanian and Israeli journalists, Crown Prince Hassan said that the Kingdom was "talking about a two way process, the resumption of meetings

and the liberalisation of trade in the Palestinian areas. The Palestinian economy is dependent on the Israeli economy by 69 per cent."

The Jordan Businessmen Association (JBA) last month urged the government to halt normalisation and trade relations with Tel Aviv until Israel allowed for smooth movement of goods between Jordan and the Palestinian territories.

In 1995 trade experts estimated the volume of trade between the Kingdom and the Palestinian territories to exceed \$200 million annually but due to Israeli security measures, the 1996 trade volume did not exceed \$30 million.

Pope appeals to Lebanese

(Continued from page 1)

resist the Israeli occupation until the liberation of all Lebanese territories in line with terms of the U.N. Resolution 425."

At the palace, the Pope was treated to a surprise birthday party and large cake — a week before he turns 77 on May 18.

Sunday's highlight will be the celebration of an open-air mass on the Beirut seashore before an expected 250,000 people.

A papal visit was initially planned for 1994 but was cancelled after a church bombing north of Beirut which left 11 worshippers dead. It is the Pope's 77th pastoral trip outside Italy despite concerns about his frail health and numerous assassination plots, the most serious attack in 1981 by a Turkish militant.

Qadhafi warns U.S. to 'be peaceful'

ABUJA (AFP) — Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi left Nigeria Saturday after a one-day official visit which climaxed with a fiery tirade against the West's treatment of Islam and a warning to the United States to "be peaceful," or else.

In an official dinner hosted by Nigerian military ruler General Sani Abacha on Friday night, Colonel Qadhafi spoke for the world's Muslim countries, saying: "We don't want war. We don't want confrontation. But we are obliged to defend ourselves. We say to America, be peaceful and you are safe."

He accused Britain, Israel and the United States of "spearheading terrorism and false propaganda against Islamic countries."

The diocesan also included Niger President Ibrahim Bare Maïnassara, who had accompanied Col. Qadhafi during the visit.

Before leaving Saturday, Col. Qadhafi met privately with Gen. Abacha and Mr. Maïnassara, sources in Nigeria's presidential palace said.

Col. Qadhafi had flown to Niger Thursday to meet Mr. Maïnassara and then to Nigeria Friday, breaking a U.N. air embargo against his country.

In Niamey, Niger, Col. Qadhafi launched a violent attack on the United Nations and the West when addressing the mid-day prayer at the capital's main mosque. He told more than 20,000 worshippers that the "Satan" incarnated by the U.N. and

Western colonialism was nearly finished.

"We are going to attack, and to mobilise Muslim forces which are much more powerful than those of the enemy, and we will conquer," he told the gathering.

He carried on his anti-West theme to the Nigerian city of Kano Friday, decrying Western portrayals of Muslims.

"Nowadays, they talk about Islam only when they talk about terrorism, killings, extremism, massacres... (such as) what is happening in Algeria."

"I want to stress to the world... that what is happening in Algeria is anti-Islamic, outside Islam, a movement that is the enemy of Islam," he said.

Libya has been under an international air embargo since 1992 for its refusal to extradite to Britain or the United States two suspects in the bombing of a Pan Am aircraft over Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1988, which killed 270 people.

The U.S. State Department said Thursday it was investigating the reports of Col. Qadhafi's embargo violation.

"If they are accurate, this would be a serious violation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 748, which prohibits Libyan aircraft from engaging in international flights," State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said.

The State Department said it planned to raise the matter at the U.N. Security Council.

Non-political jokes causing a titter in Egypt

CAIRO (AFP) — In the latest joke doing the rounds in Egypt, government officials surprised at seeing Muslim pilgrims returning from Mecca wearing crosses turn to Saudi King Fahd for an urgent explanation.

"I swear I don't know why. By Christ I don't," says the monarch.

Poking fun at the religious has replaced political jokes in Egypt, with sheikhs, priests and rabbis becoming the victims.

The nokta (joke in Arabic), which is considered here as a weapon used by the poor and oppressed to forget their hardships, has recently been the subject of a doctoral thesis at Alexandria University.

"Political jokes are becoming less necessary with the rise of freedom of speech since the 1980s," said thesis author Nahla Ibrahim Mohammad.

The new jokes in vogue are bold and very often have sexual connotations.

The favourite nokta among Cairo's youth is one telling the story of the frustrated wife who complains her

husband makes love to her only once a month.

The wife hits the roof the day she learns that her neighbour, who is married to a sheikh, makes love with her husband five times a day.

She returns home and plasters her apartment with posters bearing the slogan: "Islam is the solution."

"Since the political nokta has failed to thaw the process of democratisation, Egyptians are letting off steam by attacking two other taboos: sex and religion," said sociologist Nabil Abdul Fattah.

Ms. Mohammad explained in her thesis that this new joke trend has foreign roots, because Egyptians by tradition respect religion.

The new jokes have been adapted to Egyptian culture and have spread quickly among the youth generation because of the "absence of moral and religious barriers which parents traditionally backed."

Ms. Mohammad said that young people who enjoy telling or listening to these jokes later ask God for "forgiveness."

Mr. Fattah said these "noktas fuel hostile attitudes" towards Christian Copts or Muslims, such as a recent call by the leader of the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood to impose a special tax on Copts and expel them from the army.

Noktas are considered here a mirror of Egyptian history and social trends and new ones are constantly monitored by the security services.

In the past, political jokes topped the charts, particularly during military defeats or under dictatorships. After the 1952 revolution which toppled the monarchy, anti-Israeli jokes appeared. Even if some religious noktas were told, they were over licentious. Instead they poked fun at religious leaders who pretended to have supernatural powers or who kowtowed to the Ottoman, French or British forces which occupied Egypt.

According to Mr. Fattah, religious noktas will continue to be a trend until "real democracy" emerges in Egypt.

JORDAN TELEVISION

TEL 773111-10

PROGRAMME TWO

15:35French Programmes
16:00 Doc. — The Global Family
16:25Energy Express
16:50 Documentary — Clear War Big Fish
18:00French Programmes
19:30News headlines
19:35 Comedy — Fresh Prince of Bel-Air
20:00Doc. — World Echo
20:30 Medical Drama — Side Effects
21:10Doc. — Nautilus
22:00News in English
22:25 Series — One West Walkie
23:15Sisters

PRAYER TIMES

04:09Fajr
05:37(Sunrise) Dhuhr
12:32Dhuhr
16:12Asr
19:27Maghreb
20:54Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweifeh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel.
632785.
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation

Tel. 637440.

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757.

Terra Sancta Church Tel. 623666

Anglican Church Tel. 652826.

Armenian Catholic Church Tel.
771331.

Armenian Orthodox Church
Tel. 775261.

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.

Armenian International Church
Tel. 827126

Evangelical Lutheran Church
Tel. 824323.

German-speaking Evangelical
Congregation Tel. 845457

The Latter-Day Saints Tel.
654932.

Church of Nazareth Tel.
675691.

The Evangelical Local Church
in Amman Tel. 811295

English-speaking
Latin Catholics Parish Tel.
614190.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department
of Meteorology.

The effect of the heat wave will
last for the next three days. So, it
will be hot, dry, and dusty with
winds southeasterly moderate to

active. In Aqaba, it will be hot and
dusty, winds northerly moderate
and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.

Amman.....18/35

Aqaba.....34/41

Deserts.....16/37

Jordan Valley.....22/41

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 33, Aqaba 40 Humidity
readings: Amman 19 per cent,
Aqaba 16 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Mukhlis Halesh.....5519230

Dr. Rabi Sulkar.....856457

Dr. Fadi Al Khatib.....865436

Dr. Yousef Al Faqih.....790104

Firas pharmacy.....661912

Ferdows pharmacy.....778336

Al Asema pharmacy.....637055

Nairokh pharmacy.....623672

Al Salam pharmacy.....636730

Yacoub pharmacy.....644945

Shmeisani pharmacy.....637660

Najfi pharmacy.....847632

IRBID:

Dr. Ghazi Ta'ammeh.....250080

Al Quds pharmacy.....636381

ZARQA:

Dr. Rabeh Al Bourini.....990312

Khalifeh pharmacy.....985417

Food Control Centre.....637111

Civil Defence Department.....661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue
630341

Civil Defence Emergency.....199

Rescue Police.....192.621111.637777

Fire Brigade.....617101

Blood Bank.....775121

Highway Police.....843402

Traffic Police.....896390

Public Security Dept.....630321

Hotel Complaints.....605800

Price Complaints.....661176

Water & Sewerage Complaints.....897467

Amman Municipality Complaints
787111

Telephone Information (directory
assistance).....121

Overseas Calls.....010230

Central Amman Telephone
Repairs.....623101

Abdali Tel. Repairs.....661101

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Jordan Television.....773111

Najfi Jordan.....774111

Radio Authority.....680100

J. Electricity Authority.....815615

Electric Power Co.....636381

RJ Flight Information.....08-53200

Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:

Husein Medical Centre.....813813/32

Khalidi Maternity.....644281/6

Akileh Maternity.....642441/2

Jabal Amman Maternity.....642362

Mulhas, J. Amman.....636140

Palestine, Shmeisani.....607071

Shmeisani Hospital.....669131

University Hospital.....845845

Al-Muasher Hospital.....667227/9

The Islamic, Abdali.....666126/57

Al-Abli, Abdali.....664164/6

Italian, Al-Muhajreen.....777101/3

Al-Bashir.....775111/26

Army, Marka.....891611/15

Queen Alia Hospital.....602240/50

Amal Hospital.....674155

The Arab Centre for Heart and
Special Surgery.....865199

ZARQA:

Zarqa Govt. Hospital

Repairs.....(09)983323

Zarqa National Hospital

(09)900560

Ibn Sina Hospital.....(09)986732

Water Modern Hospital

(09)990990

IRBID:

Princess Basma Hospital

(02)275555

Greek Catholic Hospital

(02)272275

Ibn Al Nafies Hospital

(02)247100

AQABA:

Princess Haya Hospital

(03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Princess Basma celebrates birthday today

AMMAN (J.T.) — HRH Princess Basma celebrates her birthday today, coinciding with the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the Queen Alia Fund for Social Development (QAF), chaired by Princess Basma since its inception in 1977, according to a QAF statement.

The establishment of the QAF came upon the directives of His Majesty King Hussein to continue improving the living conditions of the Jordanian people. It has now 48 community development centres dispersed around the Kingdom, concentrated in rural areas, the statement said.

Princess Basma was appointed honorary ambassador of the United Nations for Human Development Affairs, and member of a senior-level commission on women's health at the World Health Organisation (WHO), the statement said. She was also appointed member of the Higher Steering Committee for Sustainable Development, formed by the U.N. secretary general, in implementation of resolutions adopted by the Earth Summit. The Princess also belongs to the Board of the Earth Council, the Earth Charter Commission, and the Board of the Population Council.

On March 8, 1996, Princess Basma was appointed extraordinary ambassador for the United Nations' Women's Development Fund (UNIFEM), in appreciation of her dedicated efforts in women's issues at national, regional, and international levels.

In December 1994, Princess Basma was given the title of Honorary Fellow



HRH Princess Basma

of Pembroke College of Oxford University. She is now preparing her thesis for a doctorate degree from Oxford, the statement said.

The Princess was also a member of the International Consultative Group for the Beijing Conference on Women. At the Arab Regional Preparatory Meeting of the Fourth Conference on Women, held in Amman in November 1994, Princess Basma was selected as the Arab Woman of the Year for 1995.

She is president of the Jordanian Association for Boy Scouts and Girl Guides, and member of the Olive Baden-Powell Society.

At the national level, Princess Basma is also the chairperson of the Jordanian National Committee for Women (JNCW), whose establishment by the government in 1992, represented a turning point for Jordanian women, the statement said.

Comprising senior officials and representatives of governmental and non-governmental bodies concerned with women's affairs, JNCW established viable mechanisms for cooperation to upgrade the status of women in Jordan, and formulated the Jordanian National Strategy for Women under which priorities

of women were defined.

To implement the strategy, Princess Basma established women's committees in all the governorates to enable Jordanian women to attain self-reliance and directly participate in defining and implementing plans and programmes aimed at enhancing their role in the society, the statement said.

Upon the Princess' initiative, 99 women were appointed members of municipal councils in the period which preceded the first general local elections.

This contributed to changing society's view towards women, and their role, later reflected in the 13 women who won local elections, one of them as mayor for the first time in the history of Jordan.

Princess Basma then established the Jordanian National Forum for Women (JNFW), comprised of women's committees to serve as the legal body representing them. JNFW's establishment was another landmark achievement for Jordanian women, the statement said.

The Princess formed a coordinating committee for non-governmental women's organisations working under the umbrella of JNCW to enhance cooperation and joint efforts of these organisations in the interest of Jordanian women.

She also continued to chair QAF and laid down the groundwork for sustainable development based on presence in targeted communities through a network of centres to study their respective situations and define their needs and priorities while training them to participate their own development projects and programmes, according to the statement.

Jordan mourns death of reclusive writer

By Nadia Mukhlis
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The renowned Jordanian author, Adib Abbassi, Friday passed away after a three-year hospital interment.

Mr. Abbassi, particularly lauded for his integrity and modesty had isolated himself from the outside world for nearly half of a century — since the partition of Palestine in 1948.

He opposed the British policy and its interference in the Arab nation and considered those responsible as anti-Arab and Zionist in nature.

Mr. Abbassi was born in 1905 in Husson, in the northern part of the Kingdom where he received his primary and secondary school training.

In 1922, he travelled to Nasserah in Palestine and joined the Qudus Arabic College.

He later joined a student

delegation at the American University of Beirut (AUB) where he studied economy and political science and then changed to Arabic literature and psychology.

Mr. Abbassi was the second Jordanian student to graduate from AUB.

In one of his most recent interviews, Mr. Abbassi explained his isolation thus, "I withdrew from the world in body only, I am always there in soul and follow events with radios and the information which guests bring me."

He published only one book in Arabic entitled "The Return of Lukman," he also wrote over 40 short stories in English all saved in notebooks and never printed.

He evidenced great interest in astronomy which he considered a "personal intellectual subject constituting creativity and originality."

A few hours prior to his



Adib Abbassi

death he donated his corneas to the Jordanian eye bank.

Mr. Abbassi loved nature, especially the Jordanian mountains.

He had great fondness for the sunset and was quoted as saying, "the beautiful

colours parading in the sky can be described only with a painter's brush or a writer's pen."

He held immense belief in the Arab World and believed that such entailed obligations to remain steadfast to the truth and fight

evil. He explained that he always defended the Arabs as he believed them to have been "assaulted and violated."

The greatest measurement of ethics is justice and when this is accomplished no inequality takes place," he said.

Mr. Abbassi, who never married, lived in an ancient house, open to nature — all his windows and doors were kept open as he stated need to "experience openness" within his house.

His house was transformed into a literature museum for gatherings of the intelligentsia.

He was honoured ten days ago as one of the most influential Jordanian short story authors.

In the end, Abbassi lived a quiet life composed of pride and dignity.

A burial procession will take place today in his hometown of Husson.

Premier calls for modernised education methodologies

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali Saturday called on universities to introduce methodologies designed to promote and modernise academic instruction and expand scopes of knowledge.

Addressing the opening session of the first Jordanian Educational Society (JES) conference at the Teachers' Club in Amman, the prime minister stated that efforts should be exerted to secure sustainable development that the Jordanian society might enjoy a decent life within an atmosphere of security, stability, while overcoming poverty.

The modern era continues to witness rapid technological development, Dr. Majali said and new educational methods constitute a basic component of social and economic development.

The premier referred to last Wednesday's meeting at the Prime Ministry chaired by His Majesty King Hussein, stating that the King has declared the commencement of a government-sponsored social security net.

The King has emphasised the importance of developing the education process and investment in human resources as a means of achieving that goal.

JES President Sami Khasawneh stated that the society strives to promote educational development.

Participants in the two-day meeting representing educationists from Jordan, Syria and Palestine will review reports covering educational systems in a number of advanced nations including Japan as well as Jordan and the Arab World.

JES Secretary Badia Murad described the society as established in the mid 1970s and since that time has been organising conferences to focus attention on development of the education systems in Jordan and the Arab World.

Following the opening session, Dr. Majali opened a book exhibition displaying educational publications.

Students, schools rewarded for environmental awareness projects

By Nadia Mukhlis
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Palace of Culture at Al Hussein Youth City Saturday held an annual environment celebration day in which twelve winning schools were presented with prizes for projects earlier submitted and upon which they have worked during the past scholastic year.

The Friends of Environment (FOE) Society organised the annual event, with the participation of over 500 students from over 250 schools.

The students ranged between 14-16 years of age and came from public, private and military schools around the Kingdom.

Twelve schools were chosen as winners subsequent to intense evaluation. The winning schools were: Mu'idi Al Riyadiyah, Nusaybah Al Mazineah, Bint Uday, Al Thawra Al Arabia, Sukaina Bint Al Hussein, Al Ribah, Riyadi Al Salt, Al Hussein Secondary School, Rafidah Al Quds, Bacaloria and Kafar Khal.

The highest mark went to Mu'idi Al Riyadiyah secondary school which discussed water pollution and potential methods of its treatment.

Al Hussein Secondary School described an ideal city in their design.

Students also investigated the basic requirements that a healthy environmental city would demand and came up with basic principles such as the importance of green area in residential neighbourhoods to work as air filters.

The students of this project insisted that their idealised city would ban smoking as studies have

demonstrated the negative impact which smoking has on society and the environment.

Mr. Dabbas explained that political, economic, social and environmental values should be taken into consideration to lessen environmental threats.

He explained that pollution in Jordan can be generally limited to three main areas:

- Pollution of surface water due to refinery and factory contamination.
- Soil pollution of and plastic rubbish which leads to the death of livestock due to their consumption of such toxic material.
- Air pollution from poisonous gases and refineries around residential areas.

Mr. Dabbas presented the winners with books, encyclopaedias and other prizes to help broaden their knowledge for future projects.

Supervisors were given token presents made of recycled glass.

FOE is an independent, non-governmental, non-profit organisation whose founders are citizens interested in implementing environmental community-based development projects.

It was founded in 1994, officially registered in 1995 and its main objectives are encouraging creativity and innovation, utilising natural energy and providing training for young students.

They are also committed to spreading awareness of the importance of a healthy environment for a healthy planet.

Brotherhood reaffirms intention to participate in upcoming elections

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Shura Council of the Muslim Brotherhood reaffirmed its intention to participate in the coming general elections, but warned the government against the introduction of "any measures aimed at restricting citizen participation."

"The Shura Council is eager to participate in the general elections, but it will keep the door open for an election boycott if the government takes any measure adversely affecting voter rights," according to a statement issued by the Muslim Brotherhood Saturday.

The Shura Council also demanded that the government "give guarantees of fair and free elections which would corroborate citizens' confidence in the democratic process and encourage them to exercise their legitimate rights."

According to the statement, "the Shura Council demands that the government remain completely neutral in the next elections."

During a meeting chaired by Shura Council Chairman Adnan Majali, the Council reaffirmed "its determination to participate in political and parliamentary activities in the Jordanian arena" through the Muslim Brotherhood's political arm, the Islamic Action Front (IAF).

The meeting, attended by 94 people, including IAF Secretary General Ishaq Farhan and the IAF Executive Committee, discussed reports covering financial, political, and administrative issues concerning the Islamic organisation, the statement said.

The Shura also "reviewed developments in the Arab-Jordanian arena, especially in regards to the Palestinian question and reaffirmed the IAF stand in support of the people of the West Bank of the Jordan River" and called for "foiling the Zionist project and rallying the [Islamic] ranks for an Arab-Islamic offensive against dangers threatening the Arab nation."

The Shura Council stated that it supports

the idea of coordination with other opposition parties, groups and personalities.

It reiterated its opposition to the one-person, one-vote system endorsed by the Lower House of Parliament in January and criticised the government of Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali for its decision to keep the electoral law unchanged.

Together with the one-person, one-vote formula, the Islamists also attacked the current administrative division, describing the current electoral districts and method of allocating seats as "unfair and unconstitutional."

They also expressed their disappointment of "the government's failure to lower the voting age" from 19 to 18, as the government of former Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti, who resigned in March, had promised.

Meanwhile, a statement issued by the Higher Committee for Coordination among the Opposition Parties, in which the IAF takes part, denied an Arabic press report which appeared on Saturday, claiming that the 11 parties in the Higher Committee were to field candidates in this autumn's parliamentary elections under a unified ticket.

The statement, signed by Secretary General of the leftist Al Hashd Party and Head of the Higher Committee for Coordination among the Opposition Parties Salem Nahhas, clarified that the Committee "did not decide on a unified ticket for the elections, although some of the members called for such move."

An Islamist-leftist coalition was proposed weeks ago by IAF Deputy Abdullah Akaleh, but IAF Secretary General Ishaq Farhan, in an interview with the Jordan Times last week, excluded the possibility of any formal electoral alliance being finalised among the parties in the Higher Committee.

Officials suspect foul play in drowning incident

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Police are investigating the death of a 20-year old man, whose body was Saturday found in a water reservoir near the Al Berketein area of Jerash, officials said.

The victim, Ghandi Aqel, was Tuesday reported missing by his family, according to the officials who added that his body was found Saturday morning in the water reservoir.

An official source, speaking on condition of anonymity, told the Jordan Times that there exists the possibility that Mr. Aqel had been murdered.

"There were traces of bruises on the man's head, which is an indication that it could be a crime and not a simple incident of drowning," the source said.

He added that an autopsy will be performed on Mr. Aqel, who was to have been wed last week, to determine the cause of his death.

Police are investigating the incident.

In other incidents in the Kingdom, a 24-year old man Friday drowned in a pool in Wadi Mujib, a Civil Defence Department (CDD) official said.

According to the official, Ayman Mustafa Ahmad, a Zarqa resident, went swimming with three of his brothers in a pool filled with eddies in the Zarqa area.

"Mr. Ahmad's brothers managed to cross the pool but their brother began to drown and they could not save him," the CDD official said.

The official told the Jordan Times Saturday that the area in which the victim had been swimming was restricted and that there were warning signs posted nearby.

"That area is menaced with whirlpools and dangerous, but unfortunately people ignore warning signs and swim in hazardous places," the CDD official said.

Last year, the CDD reported 73 swimming incidents in the Kingdom resulting in 55 deaths and 26 injuries. Most of these incidents involved individuals swimming in dangerous areas such as dams, where swimming is generally prohibited, CDD statistics said.

CDD officials cited unfamiliarity with swimming and lack of public swimming pools as the prime reasons for drowning incidents.

In the Abu Alanda area outside of Amman, a fire engulfed a company destroying the entire establishment, official reports said. No injuries were reported.

CDD reports said the cause of the fire, which occurred in the Sahri Agad Commercial Firm southeast of Amman, was attributed to an electric failure.

The police report said that the estimated losses from the fire topped JD 160,000.

WHAT'S GOING ON

EXHIBITIONS

*Drawings by the students of the Nazareth School for Girls at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Weibdeh, until May 12.

*Fifth Book Exhibition at the Bishop's School, Jabal Amman, until May 15.

*Recent drawings and sculptures by Mona Saudi entitled "Petra Tablets" at her residence in Abdoun (Tel. 829700), until May 15.

*Works by contemporary painters from the Arab World at Baladna Art Gallery,

Gardens Street (Tel. 5537598), until May 15.

*Works by Iraqi artist Nuri Al Rawi entitled "Departure of Innocence from the World" at Hamourabi Arts Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 5536098), until May 15.

*Bani Hamida spring exhibition entitled "Crossing Borders" (displaying rugs, cushions, runners and wallhangings) at the Jordan Contractors Association's Building, Deir Al Chmar (Tel. 658696), until May 18.

*Lithographs by Salim Kanaan at the Ogant Gallery, Shmeisani (Tel. 681304), until May 13.

COLOUR

An exhibition of contemporary objects
The exhibition has been extended till Wednesday, May 14th, time: 11:00 a.m.-1:30 p.m., 4:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m.
Event held at Beit Asfour, Othman Bin Affan Street, (Asfour Street previously) below Mango Mansion.

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Italy's Prodi praises Albanian Premier for deal on elections

ROME (R) — Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi praised an agreement to hold early elections in Albania when he met the Albanian country's interim Prime Minister Bashkim Fino Saturday.

Mr. Prodi and Mr. Fino, who were both accompanied by their foreign, finance and justice ministers, met at Rome's Ciampino military airport during a brief stopover in the Albanian delegation's trip to Washington.

Their five-day trip to the United States starts a day after European envoy Franz Vranitzky secured an agreement from Albania's 10 main political parties to break an impasse in holding early elections in late June.

"This (early polls) was one of the main goals of our mission in Albania," Mr. Prodi told a news conference, adding that he had spoken Friday with Albanian President Sali Berisha, who confirmed his "full support" for the elections.

Italy commands a 6,000-strong force with a three-month U.N. mandate to secure the delivery of humanitarian aid in the

impoverished Balkan state following its slide towards anarchy in March after the collapse of dubious savings schemes.

On Friday, Defence Minister Beniamino Andreatta was quoted as saying that Italy could seek a wider mandate for the multinational security force to help oversee the elections if an agreement to hold them was reached.

Mr. Fino, who said before leaving Tirana that he would seek assistance from the United States in holding the elections, called the agreement "an excellent outcome" and thanked Mr. Prodi for the role that Italy was playing in Albania.

"You are also helping to create the right economic conditions for the future and the government that will come after the polls," said Mr. Fino, who heads a nine-party government of national reconciliation set up in March to halt Albania's drift to anarchy.

He said it was now the government's responsibility to make sure the election campaign was carried out in a stable and non-violent environment.

"For the elections, we want to collaborate with all the local authorities — we are not interested in groups who are asking for the resignation of the government or of President Berisha," he said.

Mr. Fino will meet U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright Monday, and has said he will also see congressmen, senators, senior politicians, businessmen and heads of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

Meanwhile, two men died in a hail of gunfire and six others were wounded after rival armed gangs clashed Friday night in the rebel-held port of Vlore, hospital authorities reported Saturday.

Elsewhere in Albania, four people were killed in vendetta murders during the last 24 hours.

In Vlore, the leader of a well-known Kuqo gang was riddled with bullets while sitting in his car. His body was then burnt when the attackers set fire to the vehicle.

Another member of the Kuqo gang died overnight in hospital and six others

were wounded, two seriously.

The shoot-out lasted more than an hour, wreaking terror throughout Vlore. Two armed men loyal to the gang were still guarding the hospital Saturday morning after demanding that doctors do everything possible to save the lives of the wounded.

Hospital Director Servet Kojdhehi told AFP he would ask the Health Ministry for police protection for the hospital.

Since the violence erupted Feb. 28, 76 people have died from bullet wounds in Vlore's hospital, while some 50 others were killed in the streets. More than 900 people were killed throughout Albania during the same period.

Armed gangs rule this rebel stronghold and most of the town's inhabitants are armed. The mandate of the multinational force to Albania does not allow soldiers to intervene directly in such incidents, despite demands for help by the local authorities and the parallel rebel-run "Salvation Committee."



Actress Pamela Anderson Lee, her eyes downcast, is shown as she arrives with unidentified individuals for the morning court session Friday during her trial at Los Angeles Superior Court. Anderson is being sued for breach of contract by the Private Movie Company for failing to star in a film (Renter photo)

Actress turned off by film's sex scenes

LOS ANGELES (R) — Former Baywatch TV star Pamela Anderson Lee has testified that she backed out of a movie deal because she did not want to perform simulated sex after a "horrible" experience on a previous film set.

She told the court that although she was not opposed to nudity, she did object to graphic sex scenes in Hello, She Lied.

Even when a proposed naked shower scene was rewritten because of her complaints, she said, it was replaced with a scene in which her character was to have sex on a pool table.

Lee is being sued for \$5 million by the Private Movie Co., which alleges she broke an agreement to star in the film because she was offered \$500,000 to make the feature film Barb Wire, which was subsequently a box-office flop.

The Canadian-born actress, who is married to rock drummer Tommy Lee of the band Motley Crue, claimed she changed her mind about making Hello, She Lied after seeing the script.

Asked by the plaintiffs' attorney Adam Miller about her objections to sex scenes, Lee said she had had "a hor-

rible" experience on a previous movie Skip Tracer in which she performed simulated sex.

"I was thrown, I was scratched, I was bruised, I cried, I called my mother," she said of her experience.

When challenged by Mr. Miller that in fact she had made another movie Naked Souls that involved "very graphic scenes of simulated sex," eight weeks after pulling out of Hello, She Lied, Lee fixed Mr. Miller with her gaze and asked: "In your eyes graphic?"

In earlier testimony, she explained when she read the original script of Hello, She Lied, she wanted to rewrite it in the style of the comedy Dirty Rotten Scoundrels starring Michael Caine and Steve Martin.

She had also objected to a topless sunbathing scene. "It seemed like it was there for a cheap thrill," Lee said.

The actress, best known as a swimsuit-clad lifeguard in TV's Baywatch series and who has bared all for Playboy magazine, said the simulated sex scenes turned her off.

"I wanted to lose the sexual content and make it a better script," she said under direct questioning from

Mr. Miller. "Nudity has never been an issue with me," she said.

"And simulated sex?" asked Mr. Miller.

"It is now," Lee replied, citing the Skip Tracer experience.

At one point, she appeared to contradict herself, saying emphatically: "I never dropped out of the film."

But later she said: "I dropped out of the film because I hated it and it had all the sexual content in it that I had been told would be removed."

"Everybody knew the script was not a very good script and we could do better," said Lee, who wore a short-sleeved black blouse that revealed a barbed-wire tattoo around her upper left arm.

Hello, She Lied was later made as Miami Hustler in the lead role for the Showtime cable TV channel. Ireland had a "no-nudity" clause in her contract.

Lee, who was on the stand all day Friday, wound up testimony when the court adjourned for the day. It was not immediately known if she would testify next week.

Afghan opposition claims capture of 100 Taliban soldiers

KABUL (AFP) — Afghan opposition forces captured 100 Taliban fighters when they overran militia positions along the strategic Salang Highway, an opposition spokesman claimed Friday.

Fighters loyal to the ousted government's military commander Ahmad Shah Masood took hilltop and valley positions along the highway Tuesday. "We cut off some Taliban on the road and captured around 100 of them," Masood said Abdullah told AFP by telephone.

Taliban soldiers admitted losing some ground but claimed they held off a potentially crippling attack by foiling a mountain-top advance towards the Afghan capital.

They said only three of their fighters were taken prisoner. The Salang Highway links Kabul with northern Afghanistan and Central Asia, and its close proximity to a key opposition valley stronghold means Taliban advances here have so far been repelled.

Mr. Abdullah said the attack had allowed Commander Masood's forces to strengthen their positions on the highway which begins 77 kilometres north of here. "Our objective in the offensive was a limited one: We wanted to seize some part of the road and some hill tops, and we succeeded," he said. The offensive was aimed at knocking out Taliban artillery spotter posts to enable a safer opposition advance to the mouth

of the crucial road link, he said.

He reported no further attacks Thursday or Friday, but said an exchange of artillery, rocket and mortar fire was continuing close to the mouth of the Salang Pass.

The Muslim militia's frontline commander, Mullah Khair Mohammad, Wednesday said the prisoners captured by the opposition were only hapless travellers trying to cross the front, lines and journey north.

It is unclear how much ground the Taliban lost in the dawn attack, but frontline Taliban soldiers said that a southern part of the highway had fallen.

Mr. Abdullah also claimed the Taliban were suffering

mass desertions from militiamen used to the southern deserts of Afghanistan who were fed up with fighting in the mountains. "A lot of Kandaharis and Helmandis left their posts the night before without telling anybody, which allowed us to launch an effective attack," Mr. Abdullah said.

The Taliban now control around two-thirds of Afghanistan including Kabul, and are trying to advance north to impose a pure Islamic state, on a country gripped by 17 years of war.

The northern-third of Afghanistan is controlled by a coalition of the ousted Kabul government, ethnic Uzbek warlord General Abdul Rashid Dostum and a Shiite Muslim faction based in the central Massif.

U.N. chief calls for positive China role

SHANGHAI (AFP) — United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan urged China here Saturday to use its growing economic and political clout responsibly and as a force for positive change in the post-cold war order.

"No-one who has been associated with the United Nations as long as I can be in any doubt about the political importance of China in the organisation and the world," Mr. Annan said in a speech to students and faculty members from the Shanghai Academy of Social Science and Institute of International Relations.

"China's political weight and economic dynamism

give her — especially among developing countries — a unique opportunity to play a distinctive role in the shaping of the post-cold war political order," Mr. Annan said at the end of a four-day China tour that also took in Beijing and Nian.

While lauding China's economic progress and the success of its reform programme, Mr. Annan warned that the new trends of globalisation and liberalisation were threatening to reinforce the gaps between rich and poor.

"The benefits of globalisation may bring prosperity to one region, while leaving other regions in a state of stagnation and marginalisation,"

Mr. Annan said, pointing out that most of the world's new private capital flows to just 12 countries, with China alone receiving some 40 per cent. He also indicated that economic reform was not sufficient to combat the new challenges arising in the post-cold war era.

"The best defence against new global ills as macro-trafficking, corruption, and terrorism is a society based on equal opportunity, social justice, human rights and democracy," he said.

In a question and answer session following his speech, Mr. Annan sought to reassure his audience on the question of Taiwan's

possible entry into the United Nations.

"The U.N.'s position on Taiwan is very clear. The General Assembly took a decision to recognise one China, which is this one," Mr. Annan said.

"There is no possibility of recognising Taiwan until member states change that policy," he said, adding that such a change was "not on the cards."

Following his address, Mr. Annan was taken on a tour of the Pudong new area, Shanghai's economic development showcase.

Mr. Annan was due to leave for Tokyo Sunday.

43 dead as floods submerge Chinese province

BEIJING (AFP) — At least 40 people have been killed and 100,000 left homeless by ferocious rainstorms wreaking havoc in southern China, press reports said Saturday.

The storms caused the worst flooding to hit the northern counties of Guangdong province in 500 years, the semi-official China News Service said, adding 30,000 people had been completely cut off by floodwaters.

At least 10 people were missing, the news agency report said, and rainfall of up to a metre had been recorded in some districts.

The death toll from the heavy rains which have engulfed the region for three days had risen to at least 43, with several dozens missing, the China Daily newspaper in Beijing said.

A massive rescue effort had been mounted using troops and boats from the provincial military command, it added.

More than 13,000 hectares of farmland had been flooded, the English-language newspaper said.

Provincial officials said they were unable to comment when contacted by telephone

Saturday.

Other reports said 100,000 people living north of the Guangdong provincial capital of Guangzhou, some 170 kilometres northwest of Hong Kong, were made homeless by the rain, which flooded fields, destroyed dykes and devastated houses.

All electricity and telephone links to the region were severed and emergency aid of one million yuan (\$120,000) was already being distributed by soldiers, the China Youth Daily said.

In Conghua county, dykes on the Pijiang and Liuxihe rivers broke, causing at least 11 deaths. Sixteen were killed in neighbouring Huadu and in Yuanan town, eight were killed when their homes collapsed.

The Feilai Temple in Qingyuan also collapsed, killing eight Buddhist monks.

"This is the kind of big disaster that happens once every 500 years," an official from Guangdong city anti-flood department told the China Daily.

The heavy storm was also the apparent reason for the crash landing of a Boeing

737 at Shenzhen Airport late Thursday, which killed at least 35 people.

Survivors of the crash said their pilot had aborted his first landing attempt as the plane was pummeled by strong winds and driving rain. The twin-jet airplane slammed into the runway and exploded on the second landing attempt.

Meanwhile, the number of Thais killed in the China Southern Airlines Boeing 737-300 crashed has risen to 21, airline officials said Saturday.

Officials originally indicated 16 Thai tourists died in Thursday's crash, but the official said the number had been raised to 21. He did not give any details.

He declined to say how many foreigners were among the 35 people killed when China Southern Flight CZ3456 slammed into the tarmac of Shenzhen's storm-swept airport.

The Thai nationals were among a group of 25 tourists on board the aircraft, which broke into three pieces and burst into flames on impact.

Thirty-five people are known to have survived the accident, while another four were still unaccounted for Saturday.

The airline official, reached by telephone in Shenzhen, just over the border from Hong Kong, declined to give the identities of the Thais who died. The Thai embassy in Beijing could not be reached for comment.

At nearby Guangzhou Airport, more than 100 flights were cancelled, leaving 2,000 stranded, the China Daily said.

The storms have also caused disruption in Hong Kong and the neighbouring Portuguese enclave of Macau, with flooding in some areas and dozens of landslides.

One man was killed in Hong Kong when a hut collapsed.

The rain has caused traffic congestion in the territory and prompted the closure Thursday of courts and some schools.

Firefighters were called in to rescue residents trapped in elevators after power cuts.

Clinton leaves Costa Rica for Caribbean summit

BRAULIO CARRILLO NATIONAL PARK, Costa Rica (R) — Soaked by a steady rainfall and surrounded by lush greenery, U.S. President Bill Clinton Friday plunged into a tropical rain forest to call attention to the global threat of deforestation.

"I come here to emphasise the importance of the forest that surrounds us, to the chain of life not only in Costa Rica and Central America, but to all the world," Mr. Clinton said in this rain forest outside of the Costa Rican capital, San Jose.

Mr. Clinton, on a week-long tour of Latin America that included a state visit to Mexico, later departed for Barbados, the last leg of the trip, for a one-day, 15-nation Caribbean summit Saturday.

At that summit, Mr. Clinton will discuss trade, drug trafficking and law enforcement. White House spokesman Mike McCurry said Mr. Clinton wanted to dispel "a general sense in the Caribbean that the U.S. interest in the Caribbean has drifted somewhat."

In Costa Rica, Mr. Clinton spoke at the base of a deep gorge in Braulio Carrillo National Park, with dense forested hills rising up several hundred feet into the mist. A gushing waterfall streamed down about 91 metres away.

The park is named for a former Costa Rican president and home to 6,000 species of trees, 500 species of birds, 135 types of mammals, including monkeys, tapirs, jaguars, puma, ocelots and deer. This rain forest itself represents a threatened ecosystem.

The United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation has estimated that 38 million acres (15 million hectares) of the world's forests are lost each year, mostly in the Third World.

"We destroy these resources at our peril," said Mr. Clinton.

To dramatise his call, Mr. Clinton said he would personally lead the U.S. delegation to a United Nations conference in June to follow up on the 1992 earth summit in the Brazilian city of Rio De Janeiro, saying: "Together we have to reaffirm the spirit of Rio."

The United States has not ratified a biodiversity treaty to protect wildlife and plants adopted after the summit and so far has opposed informal proposals for an international treaty on forests that Canada and some European countries want.

Costa Rica is a model country for conservation, having set aside 25 per cent of its land for parks. The deforestation problem is particularly acute in other Central American countries, where poor peasants regularly burn tracts of woodland to make room for planting crops or grazing cattle.

Mr. Clinton, Costa Rican President Jose Maria Figueres and their entourage travelled into the gorge along a road that snaked through the dense woodland. The two presidents stood under a tarpaulin held up by 15 metre poles during a ceremony marking the visit, but the rain was so hard that it blew in under the tarp.

"We know that the rain forests of the world provide us with a good deal of our oxygen, and enormous resources, coming out of the plant and animal life they contain," Mr. Clinton said.

At the end of his speech, U.S. and Costa Rican officials signed two accords. One was a joint declaration in which the two countries agreed to cooperate on management of their national parks and conservation areas.

The other accord committed the United States to assist Costa Rica in development of electrically powered vehicles.

U.S., N. Korea far apart in MIA talks — U.S. official

NEW YORK (R) — U.S. and North Korean officials were "far apart" in talks on how to get "the fullest possible accounting" of U.S. servicemen missing in action from the Korean War, a U.S. defence official said Friday.

The talks began Sunday and have continued almost every day since. Alan Liotta, deputy head of the United States delegation from the Defence Department's PoW/Missing Personnel Office, said "talks ... are scheduled to go through today. Both sides are far apart."

Mr. Liotta said the first ever meeting between families of U.S. servicemen missing in the Korean War and officials of North Korea was beneficial. "It puts a human face on the issue," but he said he was "not optimistic" that an agreement would be reached.

At a press conference, relatives of the missing servicemen described their decades-long efforts to obtain information about their lost family members.

Nancy Lovell Dean, whose father was shot down over Korea on Dec. 4, 1950, said that if North Korea

wanted normalised diplomatic relations with other countries, it must address the question of what happened to unrepatriated prisoners.

Irene Mandra, sister of Sergeant Philip V. Mandra who was last seen in North Korea on Aug. 7, 1952, said she had asked the head of the North Korean delegation for a list of U.S. prisoners of war who allegedly were sent to Siberia.

The discussions are the fourth round of talks between the Pentagon and North Korea on missing U.S. troops. American and North Korean officials last met in New York a year ago, reaching an agreement that led to the recovery of the remains of a U.S. army corporal north of Pyongyang.

But a second excavation scheduled for the fall of 1996 fell through after a North Korean submarine loaded with commandos ran aground last September off South Korea.

There are still some 8,100 U.S. troops missing from the Korean War. The Pentagon has said it has no evidence that any are being held captive in North Korea.

The current U.S.-North Korean talks have had three purposes, Larry Greer, spokesman for the Defence Department's PoW/Missing Personnel Office said.

First, the United States wants to learn more about live sightings of alleged Americans still living in North Korea. Second, it wants access to North Korean military archives. Third, it wants to establish a schedule for continued joint excavations to recover the remains of Americans buried in North Korea.

Washington has chosen 10 sites it considers the most fruitful, Mr. Greer said. These were either the sites of U.S. plane crashes or known burial locations of Americans who died in battle or in North Korean prison camps.

He said it was "a certainty" that there were mass graves in North Korea containing the remains of U.S. servicemen. "We know precisely where many of them are located because of all of our thousands of interviews with returned (prisoners of war). In many cases, there are many, many Americans buried in one spot."



Demonstrators who marched through the streets of the capital to show their support for ailing President Mobutu Sese Seko Ntshumangulu returned to Kinshasa Saturday after having attended a summit of African leaders in Gabon (Reuters photo)

China's shadow Hong Kong assembly backs civil rights curbs

SHENZHEN, China (AFP) — Curbs on civil liberties in Hong Kong moved a step closer Saturday as a China-appointed assembly backed plans to restrict demonstrations and impose controls on political and other organisations after the territory's July 1 return to Chinese rule.

The Provisional Legislature discussed the proposals by the territory's future leader, Tung Chee-hwa, for several hours before unanimously passing a motion saying "a right balance between civil liberties and social order should be maintained."

No members spoke out against the proposals. The body, which is forced to meet in the Chinese border city of Shenzhen because of opposition in Hong Kong to its existence, is expected to have its first reading of the proposed legislation next Saturday.

Legislation must be read and passed three times by the Provisional Legislature and then undergo a "confirmation process" immediately after the handover before becoming law.

Saturday's session was in response to a three-week public consultation exercise on the proposals, which would require demonstrators to obtain police permission and would bar Hong Kong organisations from receiving funds from overseas, whether from individuals or other groups.

Political parties could be banned if they were deemed to endanger "national security." Demonstrators are currently required to give police advance notice of their plans but need not seek permission. Political and other bodies are free to receive funding and establish ties with other groups from anywhere in the world.

The proposals have been widely criticised by pro-democracy activists and the outgoing administration in Hong Kong, as well as by the United States and Britain.

The motion Saturday urged Mr. Tung's office to "consider and accord due respect to the views of the public" when drafting the proposed legislation.

It said the new law should meet the requirements of the international covenant on civil and political rights, "as applied to Hong Kong," and comply with the basic law, China's mini-constitution for post-handover Hong Kong.

dover Hong Kong.

The Provisional Legislature will replace the current elected Legislative Council, which will be scrapped on June 30.

One of Mr. Tung's senior officials, secretary for policy coordination Michael Suen, dismissed criticism of the proposals and claims that the consultation exercise was a sham.

"We will seriously consider the concerns of the community and will make appropriate amendments to the original proposal in order to achieve a balance between civil liberties and social stability," he said.

"On one hand, we should protect human rights and freedoms, while on the other, people should not affect others while exercising these rights."

Mr. Suen said restrictions on Hong Kong political and other organisations were necessary to prevent them becoming tools of foreign interests.

The legislation would "prevent infiltration of foreign political powers into Hong Kong...to do things unfavourable to China and Hong Kong," he told the Provisional Legislature.

"The spirit behind this proposal is to prohibit political funding," added Mr. Suen, a former colonial government official who was seconded to Mr. Tung's office.

"Our idea is to prevent political organisations using individuals as a disguise to give funding to local organisations."

"We don't have any intention to suppress individual freedoms or to place restrictions on political organisations or to deprive any association or political organisation of its rights."

A member of the Provisional Legislature, Jim Pui-chung, said, "a small group of people promoted dissenting voices in the community aiming to manipulate the people of Hong Kong" over the proposed changes.

"In fact we members of the Provisional Legislature should guide Hong Kong people's ideology on this," added Mr. Jim, without identifying members of the group he referred to.

Saturday's meeting also completed the third reading of a bill on public holidays, which largely replaces holidays marking events with colonial links with Chinese celebrations.

Pakistan says no 'quick fix' in talks with India

BANDOS, Maldives (R) — Pakistan Saturday played down the prospects of a quick breakthrough in peace talks with arch-enemy India, saying there could be setbacks and negotiations would take a long time.

"Expectations should not be built up because unless the groundwork is there, there could be disappointments," Pakistani Foreign Minister Gohar Ayub Khan told reporters on the margins of a meeting of foreign ministers of the South Asian region.

Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and his Indian counterpart, Inder Kumar Gujral, were scheduled to hold their first face-to-face talks Monday at a resort on this Indian Ocean island state.

Mr. Sharif was named prime minister in February and Mr. Gujral took office three weeks ago. They have exchanged letters expressing their hope that the two long-time rivals could ease tensions.

"Let's hope that something positive comes out, but one has to be very cautious on it. It will be a long, drawn-out negotiation."

There will be no quick fix, said Mr. Khan, adding that a half-century-old quarrel over Kashmir was Pakistan's core issue.

"We have waited 50 years, there had been three wars," Mr. Khan said, referring to the armed conflicts between the neighbouring countries since independence in 1947.

"Let's hope there are no more wars on it (Kashmir), but we'll have to negotiate with patience."

The talks between the two leaders Monday were to take place on the fringes of a summit of the seven-nation South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in the Maldives.

The two nations launched bilateral negotiations in March after a three-year hiatus marked by tension over the Himalayan region of Kashmir, where police and hospital officials say more than 20,000 people have died in a separatist insurgency.

The two nations' foreign secretaries — the top civil servants in the foreign ministries — met in late March, followed by talks last month between Mr. Khan and Mr. Gujral, who was foreign minister before being elevated to prime minister.

Mr. Gujral has kept the Foreign Ministry portfolio to himself in his centre-left government.

Mostly Hindu India controls two thirds of Kashmir, while Islamic Pakistan rules over the rest.

Mobutu returns to Kinshasa Rebel offensive continues

KINSHASA (AFP) — Zaire's President Mobutu Sese Seko returned to the capital Kinshasa Saturday afternoon from Gabon where he had been attending a summit of central African leaders.

The plane carrying the ailing leader landed in a military zone of Kinshasa's airport, off-limits to waiting reporters and photographers.

Mr. Mobutu was escorted from the airport to his headquarters at the Tshatshi military camp in a heavily-armed convoy, reporters said.

Earlier, he had left the Gabon capital Libreville after agreeing to meet for a second time with rebel leader Laurent Kabila, according to South Africa's Deputy President Thabo Mbeki.

Mr. Mbeki had flown to Libreville to meet Mr. Mobutu, after holding talks Friday with Mr. Kabila who has already given his agreement to a summit following the two men's first meeting a week ago.

Both men have agreed to meet on the South African ship Outeniqua at Pointe Noire (off the Congolese coast) next Wednesday, Mr. Mbeki said in Libreville.

"We are therefore preparing for that meeting next Wednesday on the boat, in finalise the negotiations between them, about the future of Zaire, between the (rebel) alliance and the government," he said, adding that he expected meeting to conclude the negotiations.

"There might be questions of details that might have to be attended afterward. But the principal questions about the transition, about the place of President Mobutu, those major questions, we believe, need to be resolved by Wednesday," Mr. Mbeki told reporters.

In Libreville, a source close to Gabonese President Omar Bongo confirmed that a meeting was to take place, although the specific time and agenda were not available.

Mr. Mobutu's return put paid to previous speculation that the embattled dictator had not intended to return to his country's capital which is threatened by recent rebel advances.

Mr. Mobutu also has a bourse on the French Riviera.

Earlier Saturday Mr. Kabila said in his southeastern stronghold of Lubumbashi that rebel troops were only about 50 kilometres from Kinshasa. "We would have captured it but for interference — people saying 'wait ... you're going to shed blood for no reason'," Mr. Kabila said of the capital.

"We want to resolve things by peaceful dialogue," he said.

said.

But he added that the rebel offensive — which has seized most of Zaire since it began in October — was continuing.

A U.S. State Department official said there was a mood of urgency surrounding another Mobutu-Kabila meeting because of the rebel advance, amid fears of bloodshed in Kinshasa.

The first Mobutu-Kabila encounter last Sunday was inconclusive, with both leaders essentially sticking to their positions.

Mr. Mobutu agreed at Thursday's Libreville summit not to stand again in presidential elections. He had not previously been so explicit.

But Mr. Kabila's Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire have said they will not accept power being handed to an interim head of state other than Mr. Kabila himself.

That dampened hopes that the Archbishop of Kisangani, Laurent Mosengwa, could resume a former post as president of the transitional parliament.

Such a position would have made the Roman Catholic archbishop Zaire's interim leader under the constitution if Mr. Mobutu resigned.

U.S. envoy Bill Richardson expressed cautious optimism Friday that a peaceful transition could be achieved, with Mr. Kabila at the head of a transitional government.

Mr. Richardson, who brokered the first Mobutu-Kabila meeting, told U.S. public television: "I do believe there's still a good chance of a peaceful, inclusive transition government."

He called Mr. Kabila "street smart" and "pragmatic," but said the president was "not facing reality" because his advisors were not telling him the truth about the pitiful state of his forces.

Mr. Richardson added: "I believe that Mobutu is now realistic; he's a dignified person; he wants to go out gracefully."

Speaking Friday, Zairean Information Minister Kin-Kiey Mulumba said government forces were holding a line on the Wamba River west of Kenge, although a rebel spokesman claimed that guerrillas were 50 kilometres to the west.

Hundreds of people are feared to have died in the fighting for Kenge, one of the first times the Zairean army has put up serious resistance against rebels who have seized two thirds of Africa's third largest country.

Republicans suspected of N. Ireland police murder

BELFAST (R) — Northern Ireland police Saturday were trying to track down suspected Republican gunmen who shot dead an off-duty police officer in a crowded Belfast bar.

Police said a car thought to have been used by fleeing guerrillas was found burnt out in the Lower Falls area of the city, a staunch stronghold of Catholic Republicans who want the majority Protestant province to be united with Ireland.

No group admitted responsibility for the murder, which cast a pall over hopes that the province's long-running guerrilla conflict might ease after last week's British election which put the Labour Party in power with a huge majority.

The Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) officer, believed to be from Belfast's fiercely pro-British Protestant Shankill area, was shot at close range as he was drinking late Friday.

Security sources said the killing had all the hallmarks of a guerrilla attack. One said the gunman "coolly and calmly" walked up to his victim and opened fire as he drank in the bar.

Media reports in the provincial capital said the killing was thought to have been carried out by "Republican paramilitaries," Irish guerrillas opposed to British rule.

The Irish Republican Army (IRA), the main underground group fighting to merge Northern Ireland into an all-Ireland state, has not

struck in the province since April 10 when a sniper seriously wounded a police woman.

The small left-wing Irish National Liberation Army announced last year that its activists were on a war footing, but security sources say it has not staged many attacks because it was caught up in a bloody internal feud.

The Irish Continuity Army Council, composed of former IRA activists, emerged last year and has staged several bombings.

Tension has been high since an IRA ceasefire ended last year and a truce by pro-British loyalist guerrillas has become increasingly unstable.

On Friday community fears increased when a 25-

year-old Catholic man died in hospital 12 days after being savagely kicked by a loyalist mob in Portadown, where divisions run deep between pro-British Protestants and pro-Irish Catholics.

The man's family accused police of doing nothing to save the man. The RUC denied the charge.

On Thursday Britain's new Prime Minister Tony Blair had talks on the Northern Ireland conflict with his Irish counterpart John Bruton, fuelling hopes of fresh momentum in a stalled Anglo-Irish bid to bring peace to the troubled region.

Both governments say the IRA must abandon violence for its Sinn Fein political wing to gain entry to the talks.

Bosnian Serbs arrest former Croat militia officer

SARAJEVO (R) — U.N. police monitors said they were trying to secure the release of a former Bosnian Croat militia officer who was arrested by Serb police during a routine traffic check.

Ivo Mijacic, who led a Croat brigade during the Bosnian war, was arrested as he drove through Serb-controlled territory Thursday on a main road linking northern Bosnia to neighbouring Croatia, U.N. spokesman Alex Ivankov said.

Human rights worker say nationalist authorities have flouted international legal standards set out under the peace agreement, often under the guise of "war crimes trials" against ethnic rivals.

"We are pressing Serb authorities as we speak to release this gentleman," Mr. Ivankov told Reuters.

Serb authorities in the town of Modrica had charged Mr. Mijacic with sheltering a Serb bourse during the war, U.N. police monitors reported.

The arrest comes amid growing concern among international officials over dubious legal proceedings in Bosnia.

Human rights worker say nationalist authorities have flouted international legal standards set out under the peace agreement, often under the guise of "war crimes trials" against ethnic rivals.

Mr. Ivankov called the arrest a "disturbing incident" and a clear violation of the right to free movement under terms of a Bosnia peace agreement.

Mr. Mijacic was having rented the truck that authorities say was used to blow up the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building on April 19, 1995, killing 168 people.

An axle from the destroyed truck was one of the first major pieces of evidence recovered after the bombing and a hidden identification number on it led authorities to the Junction City rental agency.

The prosecution contends that Mr. Mijacic is Kling and that he drove the six-metre truck full of explosives to Oklahoma City about five hours away. Mr. Mijacic has pleaded not guilty. He faces the death penalty, if convicted.

Mr. Elliott said the renter came to his shop Saturday, April 15, saying he wanted a truck to drive to Nebraska from Kansas and wanted to pick it up the following Monday afternoon.

Mr. Elliott added that Mr.

A Serb court in Zvornik recently sentenced three Muslim men to 20 years in prison on murder charges after denying them the right to choose their own defence lawyers.

Bosnian Muslim-Croat Federation authorities have yet to review the case of a Serb soldier convicted of murder during the war. His defence lawyer has discovered that two of the alleged murder victims are alive and well.

Bosnian authorities this week detained an opposition politician during a session of the federation parliament.

Ibrahim Djedovic, who helped lead an armed rebellion against the Bosnian go-

vernment during the Yugoslav conflict, was taken to a Sarajevo prison Friday, Mr. Ivankov said.

Under terms of the peace treaty, Bosnian authorities have the right to conduct war crimes trials if the U.N. war crimes tribunal in the Hague decides that the case meets international legal standards.

Mr. Ivankov said the tribunal had told the Bosnian authorities they could go ahead with an investigation against Mr. Djedovic.

"The prosecutor has stated that there is sufficient evidence under international standards for national courts to proceed with a further investigation," he said.

McVeigh identified as man who rented bomb truck

DENVER (R) — The owner of a rental agency has identified Timothy McVeigh as the man who rented the truck used to blow up the Oklahoma City federal building as the prosecution continued to rapidly build its case.

Eldon Elliott, of Elliott's Body Shop in Junction City, Kansas, told Mr. McVeigh's trial that the 29-year-old Gulf War veteran rented the truck under the name of Robert Kling and presented a South Dakota driver's licence in that name.

"That's him, the man in the blue shirt," Mr. Elliott said, pointing to Mr. McVeigh in the courtroom.

The prosecution's case has been speeding along since testimony started two weeks ago and the government is now expected to wind up its case in the next two weeks.

Mr. Elliott's testimony was the first time that a witness had directly identified Mr.

McVeigh as having rented the truck that authorities say was used to blow up the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building on April 19, 1995, killing 168 people.

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Mr. Elliott said the renter came to his shop Saturday, April 15, saying he wanted a truck to drive to Nebraska from Kansas and wanted to pick it up the following Monday afternoon.

Mr. Elliott added that Mr.

McVeigh declined to take insurance on the truck even though the rental agency owner warned him that he would be liable for any damage. Mr. Elliott quoted Mr. McVeigh as saying, "I won't need it... I'm a good driver."

Mr. McVeigh paid \$280.32 for the rental, including an \$80 deposit, the rental agent said.

Mr. Elliott testified that Mr. McVeigh did not go outside with him for the customary walk around inspection of the vehicle when he came back to the rental office to pick the truck up Monday, April 17, 1995.

Mr. Elliott also testified that he saw another man standing in the corner of the rental office while Mr. McVeigh was there, but could not identify him. "I just barely glanced at him as I walked outside."

Initially, investigators believed two men rented the truck, a weakness the de-

fence tried to exploit during cross-examination. But Mr. Elliott held firm, saying he did not know who the second man was although he did see him talk to Mr. McVeigh.

The man was originally believed to be a suspect dubbed by officials as John Doe No. 2. A nationwide manhunt was launched, but failed to turn up a second suspect.

The day of the bombing, Mr. Elliott received a call from the Ryder headquarters in Florida, notifying him that the truck he had rented out was believed to be the one used to carry the explosives.

Mr. Elliott testified that he told FBI agents the man who rented the truck was about 1.7 metres to 1.8 metres, with a medium build and short hair. But under cross-examination he admitted he was not really certain of Mr. McVeigh's height.

Hashimoto in Peru for thank-you trip

LIMA (R) — Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto arrived in Peru early Saturday on a one-day trip to formally thank President Alberto Fujimori for resolving the four-month hostage siege at the Japanese ambassador's home in Lima.

Mr. Hashimoto landed at Lima's military airport at 12.00 a.m. (0620 GMT) amid tight security with helicopters circling overhead beaming huge search-lights on to the runway.

Peru's Prime Minister Alberto Pandolfi and acting Foreign Minister Jorge Gonzales met Mr. Hashimoto after an 18-hour trip across the Pacific — more time than the Japanese leader will spend in Lima before he flies out again later Saturday.

During his rush visit, Mr. Hashimoto will decorate the

Peruvian commandos who rescued all but one of the 72 held by Marxist rebels after their Dec. 17 snuffing of a VIP-packed reception in honour of Japanese Emperor Akihito.

He will also give his condolences to the bereaved families of the Peruvian captive judge and two soldiers who died in the April 22 raid and visit former hostages and commandos recuperating in hospital from injuries sustained in the strike.

Mr. Fujimori, the son of Japanese immigrants, said he hoped Mr. Hashimoto's second trip to Lima since August and the leaders' fourth meeting in less than a year would further cement the close relations between the two countries.

Both governments say the hostage crisis strengthened their ties, but relations were often strained during the

126-day siege as Mr. Hashimoto persistently called on Mr. Fujimori to curb his hawkish tendencies and pressed for a negotiated solution.

Mr. Hashimoto has lauded Peru for its lightning attack, launched during a rebel soccer game from tunnels dug under the mansion, but he has also said he regretted Lima did not warn him of the strike, which technically took place on Japanese territory.

After governments around the world initially heaped praise on Mr. Fujimori for the meticulously planned assault, enthusiasm has waned following reports that troops executed at least two rebels during the attack.

All 14 Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) hostage-takers were killed during the assault on the Japanese embassy complex.

Group armed 'to wage war' arrested in U.S.

LOS ANGELES (R) — Los Angeles police arrested five members of an anti-government "militia cell" in early-morning raids Friday, seizing an arsenal of grenades, automatic rifles and thousands of rounds of ammunition, authorities said.

"These people believed in having a sufficient amount of weapons to wage a war," said

Police Captain Joe Currier.

"They were much better trained, much better disciplined than the North Hollywood bank robbers," he said, referring to two robbers who shot it out with police in February in a robbery caught live on television.

The five men were arrested in a series of raids by the anti-terrorist division of the Los

Angeles Police Department (LAPD) and were charged with weapons violations, including possession and/or sales of automatic assault weapons.

The LAPD said in a statement that the arrests were the culmination of a two-year investigation into "anti-government" militia that started after the Oklahoma City bombing in April 1995.

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Symbolic visit

POPE JOHN Paul II's visit to Lebanon may not bring the real reconciliation and total freedom that it has been seeking for over 20 years. Reconciliation and freedom are both qualities that only the Lebanese themselves can acquire. The reaction, however, of different political and religious factions to the Pope's visit is in itself a strong indication that the Lebanese will continue to seek to live in harmony and peace among themselves and with their two powerful neighbours.

Whether they like it or not, Lebanon's own fate is very much tied to the success or failure of the current Middle East peace process. Once peace is established between Palestine and Israel as well as between Syria and Lebanon there will be no reason for foreign forces to remain on Lebanese soil, nor will there be cause for the Lebanese to continue to be divided by religion.

In the 1950s, 60s and early 70s Lebanon was a model of religious tolerance and coexistence. It was one of the few Arab countries to hold frequent parliamentary elections at that time. Its press was vibrant and its economy thriving. Many of the causes which led to the 1975-1990 civil war had nothing to do with the Lebanese social mosaic. The last chapter of the cold war and regional conflicts were fought on its soil, leading to the intervention of foreign forces and Israeli occupation.

Despite the miseries of its civil war and the destruction it caused, Lebanon and the Lebanese are emerging with a new spirit. That spirit is being demonstrated in the overwhelming welcome with which the Lebanese Christians and Muslims accorded the Pope who comes with a message of peace and fraternity.

The Pope's visits to all areas of conflict in Europe, Africa, Latin America and elsewhere are part of his noble mission as the spiritual leader of Christians everywhere. His is a message of peace, tolerance, coexistence and goodwill. That message he carries to Lebanon as well. He sees in that country the potential of becoming a model for religious coexistence in a world that has been badly wounded by sectarian strife. He knows that it is up to the Lebanese themselves to sort out their domestic differences. And that the U.S. and the regional powers must help Lebanon regain full sovereignty.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER for Al Ra'i Saturday said that the U.S. government must have concluded a deal with the Hamas movement in exchange for the release of Musa Abu Marzuq from a New York jail and his deportation to Jordan. Quoting a report in the Cairo daily Al Ahram, Fahed Fanek said that Hamas has agreed to refrain from launching attacks on American interests and Israeli civilians in exchange for Abu Marzuq's release. At the same time, the U.S. was afraid that by keeping Abu Marzuq in its jails, it would draw the wrath of Hamas and so it chose to banish the Hamas leader to Jordan which, as usual, he said, welcomes freedom fighters and free Arabs in exchange of nothing. The writer asked why Abu Marzuq should be banished to Jordan when he could have been sent to Egypt, which had issued his travel documents, or Yemen or the Palestine self-rule areas, and why Jordan should allow the U.S. and Israel to use its territory as a ground for banishing undesired people. While welcoming the Hamas leader in Jordan, we have the right to ask about the nature of the transaction that took place between Jordan, Israel, the U.S. and Hamas, although we are not against Abu Marzuq as an honourable freedom fighter, he added. The writer said Jordanians have the right to reject American and Israeli demands and terms and stand against transforming their country into a place of banishment serving other nations.

IT IS because Jordan is concerned about the continuation of the peace process and about preventing the process from slow death that its diplomacy is displaying a flurry of activity and seeking to defuse tension, said Al Ra'i daily in an editorial Saturday. The paper referred to King Hussein's meetings with Benjamin Netanyahu in Aqaba and Foreign Minister Fayez Tarawneh's current visit to Cairo as part of the Jordanian diplomatic offensive to revive the peace process and to ensure that the Arab parties maintain their coordination in matters related to the Arab-Israeli disputes. It said that Jordan cannot stand by and watch the peace process die because Israel is carrying out settlement programmes or refusing to provide Jordan with its share of water, in accordance with the 1994 peace treaty, and then it has to take some action to end the impasse. The paper said Jordan realises the importance of its strategic depth, which lies with the Arab Nation, and strives to coordinate its position vis-à-vis Arab-Israeli issues in general and the peace process on the Palestinian-Israeli track in particular.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

Middle East economic conferences losing steam

By Dr. Fahed Fanek

THE FIRST Middle East economic summit convened in Casablanca in 1994, during the short-lived Arab-Israeli peace euphoria. Shimon Peres, then Israeli foreign minister, joyfully declared the birth of a New Middle East of peace and prosperity. Expectations were running very high, and observers thought that the train of peace had taken off with an American engine. They asserted that no power on earth can stop the new trend.

In 1995, Amman hosted the second Middle East economic summit, or Casablanca-2. Everything seemed, at the time, to be going in the right direction. The Amman summit announced the formation of a set of joint institutions to serve as the infrastructure of the emerging Middle East economic summits which, for all practical purposes, replaced the annual Arab summit conferences.

Then came Netanyahu at the helm of national fanatics and Jewish religious fundamentalists. Israel started to hack off from the peace-for-land formula. The ultimate objective became the perfect security of Israel as a state and the full security of Israelis as individuals, irrespective of the unreasonable political behaviour of the Israeli government towards peace and the rights of the Palestinian people.

Egyptian officials did not hide their intention to call off Casablanca-3, scheduled for Cairo in 1996. However, the American intervention and heavy pressure convinced Egypt to reconsider its position and to allow the conference to take place as planned. Egypt downgraded the Israeli role and downgraded the summit to a conference which was dominated by businessmen more than officials and politicians.

Now it is time to ponder about Casablanca-4, scheduled for Doha, Qatar this autumn. It is not too early to decide whether the conference will actually take place, in spite of the non-conducive and poisonous atmosphere, or be declared dead, since economics is not a feasible entrance to peace before the political deadlock in the Arab-Israeli relations is resolved satisfactorily one way or another.

So far, we did not hear from Qatar. There is no evidence that the designated host country has made up its mind in this respect. America is not expected to exert pressure this time to maintain the momentum which lost steam. Even America should admit that the Arab-Israeli peace process is going up in smoke.

In the meanwhile, the Middle East infrastructure institu-

tions have failed badly, especially the Middle East Businessmen Council and the Development Bank of the Middle East and North Africa.

Finally, Morocco gave a signal that it is in the process of taking a formal decision to abolish the permanent secretariat of the Middle East economic conferences which became meaningless.

It goes without saying that the collapse of the Middle East series of economic conferences and the crash of the American-sponsored peace process is a setback for America and its credibility as a superpower which fails to play its role and honour its commitments in this region.

It seems that the whole Middle East is ready for the change, but Israel is not. Middle East conferences and any form of cooperation should be suspended until Israel is rehabilitated and becomes ready to go back to basics, which start with full withdrawal against full peace and normalisation.

With the exception of America, the whole world sees a rogue state in Israel. Israel is an isolated pariah; why, then, should the Arabs rescue it out of the isolation it earned and deserved?

The trouble with Turkey is the permeating corruption

By Gwynne Dyer

THERE IS a coup coming in Turkey, and it will not really be about "saving" the secular Turkish state from militant political Islam (though that is what the soldiers will claim). It will really be about saving Turkey from the unholy alliance between the mafia and the politicians. But how can a coup stop that?

"If you're going to sink, you grab at snakes," Turks love proverbs, and that was the dominant reaction last year when Tansu Ciller, Turkey's first woman prime minister, agreed to join a coalition with the Islamic revivalists of the Refah (Welfare) Party. But it was her decision that set the avalanche in motion.

Tansu Ciller stepped down as prime minister and agreed to serve as deputy to Refah leader, Necmettin Erbakan, in a new coalition, because she needed his help to abort two judicial inquiries into her family's financial dealings. (An inquiry into accusations that Refah had misused funds intended for Bosnian Muslims was stopped at the same time). But the corruption does not stop there: the whole state has been infected.

In December, President Suleyman Demirel wrote bluntly to Prime Minister Erbakan: "Murderers are working for the state." He was referring to a lethal mixture of war, drugs and money that has been eroding both democracy and

legality in Turkey for a decade.

It was a car crash on the Susurluk road six months ago that started to bring the whole ugly business into the open. When the coup happens, pundits will blame it all on the "fundamentalists," but the problem is really the gangsters.

I once nearly got killed on the Susurluk road myself — with the twins, then eight years old, in the back of the car — but the grinning cretin who nearly did us in drove his truck away into well-deserved obscurity. The truck driver who pulled out onto the Susurluk road without looking on Nov. 3, 1996, however, is now a famous man. In fact, he is a folk hero for many Turks.

Why? Because a Mercedes travelling at an estimated 135 kph and carrying very important people smashed into his truck. The Merc was ripped open as it slid under the truck, killing a police academy chairman, a wanted gangster, and his moll (a former beauty queen), and injuring a senior politician who belongs to Ciller's True Path Party. So what were they all doing in the same car?

This was "100 Watergates," as a Turkish political analyst put it. The gangster, Abdullah Catli, had been wanted by Interpol for 18 years — for the torture and murder of seven left-wing Turkish students in 1978, for involvement in the 1981 assassination attempt on the Pope, and for

escaping from a Swiss prison where he was being held on heroin-smuggling charges in 1990.

Western intelligence agencies also tag Catli for killing left-wing extremists and Kurdish separatists, and for taking part in a failed coup in Azerbaijan in 1994. So there he was, dead with his girlfriend in a car that also contained a senior police officer (deceased) and a senior politician (injured) — plus the thug's diplomat's passport, false identity cards and a gun license bearing the signature of the interior minister, Mehmet Agar.

Just to make sure nobody missed the point, the car also contained unlicensed guns, silencers, surveillance equipment and traces of cocaine. If you had any illusions about who really runs Turkey, Susurluk is where you would have lost them. Turkey has become a gangster state where many, maybe most, politicians are entangled in a web of illegal violence and corruption.

If you just read the news reports, the growing crisis in Turkey seems to be about the inexorable advance of political Islam. Every month or so, Prime Minister Erbakan is called in by the army to hear new warnings that he must stop trying to "Islamise" Turkey. Rumours of coups abound, and the country is in perpetual turmoil.

But the truth is that Erbakan's Refah Party only managed to get 21 per cent of the Turkish vote in the

last election, even with no rivals to split the Islamist vote. Four-fifths of the Turks voted for strictly secular parties, and Erbakan's party could never have formed a government if it weren't for Ciller's legal troubles.

The real problem is that all the parties in Turkey have been deeply corrupted by the huge amounts of illegal money sloshing around in the system as a result of the long war against Kurdish separatists in the south-east.

It began with simple pay-offs to local Kurdish chiefs who could keep their people in line — but this was money never entered in the books. Then the Kurdish bosses loyal to Ankara were given tacit permission to earn more funds by exporting heroin to Europe, and their financial clout grew as fast as their ambitions. By now, the war has corrupted the whole political system.

Sedat Bucak, the politician who survived the car crash at Susurluk, is a member of parliament for Ciller's True Path Party. But he is also a Kurdish warlord who receives \$1.3 million a month from the Turkish government to pay off his supporters in the south-east — and he probably pays out as much in bribes in Ankara and elsewhere to protect his friends in the drug trade.

Bucak is just a simple man exploiting the opportunities that fortune has put in his way. He belongs in jail, but that wouldn't put a dent in Turkey's real problem,

which is that the war against the Kurds is steadily destroying the integrity of the state.

The right solution is to end the war. It would probably not harm Turkey to grant the Kurds — who are about one-fifth of the population — equal rights in every sphere, including education in their own language and official bilingualism in Kurdish-majority areas. Most Turkish Kurds have little love for the time-wrap Maoists of the Kurdistan Worker's

Party (PKK) rebels, and would gladly ditch them if their rights were recognised within Turkey.

Unfortunately, what is happening instead, is a steady drift towards a military coup. Whatever the soldiers' merits may be in terms of incorruptibility, that is the circumstance, least likely to lead to an early peace with the Kurds. On the contrary, the war may be intensified — and the army itself may be corrupted. Turkey is in deep trouble.

LETTERS

'Grist for writing'

To the Editor:

AHMAD MAJDOUBEH stated in his column, "Cultural impediments and pursuit of education in the U.S." (Jordan Times, May 1, 1997) that Arab students do not sell themselves well in their applications and do not write well. As an American educator who has taught high school and college-level English in the U.S., Denmark, Rome and two very good schools in Amman, I know at least his second observation is correct. I suspect the first is correct as well. I have a son entering college this fall, and we have just completed the many-faceted application process. My experience tells me, however, that the solution to the "cultural impediment" goes beyond what Dr. Majdoubeh suggests.

One advantage my students had in European and American schools was a class size smaller than is found in Jordan. English cannot be taught to crowds of students effectively. Writing is not a lecture course during which students take notes and apply the knowledge in their assignments. One learns to write by writing, followed by refinement and practice.

Furthermore, writing teachers spend hours of free time outside the classroom grading and commenting on the written assignments. For these reasons, the National Council of Teachers of English recommend that in the public schools in America, the class load of the English teacher be not more than four classes of 20 students each, for a total of 80 students. Private schools should expect an even lower ratio if excellence is truly the goal of the programme. Of course, this assumes that the teacher's training and instructional supervision is commensurate to the skills needed to pursue such excellence!

Then, American education is not test driven. Students in Jordan study for a good test grade. They live from test to test, which all too often asks for memorised facts instead of their application. This is not true in the U.S.; classes there are designed to engage the student's curiosity and reward a sense of discovery. Instead of lectures and memorisation, students learn by doing. There is no rote learning other than the multiplication tables. Tests and class activities are based upon not only simple comprehension of knowledge; they are geared towards the higher level thinking skills as well, the evaluation and synthesis of the material. Specialists help children on both sides of the learning-ability spectrum: those with learning and reading disabilities as well as the gifted.

With little governmental or ministry interference, schools plan the curriculum that is appropriate to the school's particular children. For example, field trips happen with no interference from outside the school. Within the schools, teachers and principals are held accountable for the effectiveness of the teaching in the classrooms and instructional supervision is an ongoing process.

In addition, students have the opportunity in school to study any number of electives. Beginning in primary school, for example, they are able to learn how to play any of the band or orchestra instruments and participate in any number of music groups, right during the school day, every day of the week. Theatre productions, clubs, community involvement happen right within the school building on a regular basis. Field trips are planned regularly to augment the curriculum. There are academic, debate, foreign language, and vocational education, state-wide competitions and televised quizzes.

Which brings me back to writing. The mere fact that courses are not confined to lecture and tests provides grist for writing. In addition, the availability of enrichment gives a student something to write about. In the process, the student has learned that his or her viewpoint is important.

The two schools where I have taught in Jordan are moving in this direction. I hope the other schools follow suit, because the hard-working, energetic young people here deserve the very best in their education.

Christy Lamm,
AmmanBeyond the market,
a different kind of equity

By Peter D. Sutherland

WASHINGTON — The greatest economic challenge facing the world is the need to create an international system that not only maximises global growth but also achieves a greater measure of equity, a system that both integrates emerging economic powers and assists currently marginalised countries in their efforts to participate in worldwide economic expansion.

In the midst of today's global political and economic revolution, national governments alone simply cannot cope with the challenges presented by a borderless economic system. The most important means available to secure peace and prosperity into the future is to develop effective multilateral approaches and institutions.

For a millennium, Europe and the United States have dominated the world economically, but this predominance is coming to an end. The past two decades have been a period of spectacular economic advance. Within the next 15 years we may well see three developing countries among the world's six largest economies.

However, other countries, especially in Africa, have experienced unprecedented decline. The world has become more and more polarised as the gulf between rich and poor has widened.

Some in the rich countries are made uncomfortable by the success of other nations. There is a sense of insecurity among those who feel that the radical changes taking place challenge our societies and our comforts.

After the collapse of ideological conflict between East and West, there has also been a disturbing tendency to look upon the widening gap between rich and poor with indifference. Some even see the reduction in support for the poor and the increase in earnings of the wealthy as a positive encouragement for economic growth.

There are those who oppose redistribution policies in principle, whether in the domestic or the international context. This is wrong. It is morally wrong, it is pragmatically wrong, and we ought not to be ashamed to say so.

I have been personally and deeply committed to promoting the market system through my entire career. Yet it is quite obvious to me that the market will never provide all the answers to the problems of poverty and inequality.

The fact is that there are those who will not be able to develop their economies simply because market access has been provided. I do not believe that we in the global community will adequately live up to our responsibility if we have done

no more than provide the poorest people and the poorest countries with an opportunity to succeed. We must also provide them with a foundation from which they have a reasonable chance of seizing that opportunity — decent health care, primary education, basic infrastructure.

We have an opportunity that mankind has never had before: to develop relationships based on something more morally acceptable than alliances born of fear of a common threat, and to fashion structures that enable us to live and grow together.

New creativity and strong leadership in the way we approach the global economy is urgent. The existing forums for the development of global economic policy initiatives are inadequate. The perspectives of the Group of Seven and the OECD do not represent the world economic community. Their capacity to set and pursue global economic objectives or provide direction, while undoubtedly important, is limited.

We have, in short, a structural deficit in the world economy, in terms both of the making of policies and of their execution. The structures for coordination of international economic issues at the highest political level must be revised. Most importantly, they must be representative enough to command the necessary consensus for effective action.

No new bureaucracy is needed. The existing institutions — the IMF, the World Bank, the World Trade Organisation, the OECD — have the leadership and the capacity to meet the world's need for greater coherence and greater representation in global economic policy making.

But to do so, they require the full support of their membership. This means, in the first instance, providing resources. The lamentable practice in recent years of the most powerful nations on earth squabbling over relatively small amounts of money needed to finance the institutions they created must be replaced with positive support.

Rich countries and poor countries should jointly apply their intellectual capacity to identifying new approaches to the problems of marginalisation and development.

We have a shared responsibility for the well-being of the poor of this planet, and in our rapidly globalising economy it is profoundly in our own interest to confront that responsibility aggressively. Part of the solution must lie with governments working more cooperatively together to support efficient, well-functioning international agencies.

The writer is chairman of Goldman Sachs International and also of the Overseas Development Council, a non-profit international policy research institute based in Washington. This article is reprinted from the International Herald Tribune.

Government frees prices of maize and barley

By Ghaila Alul
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — In an attempt to gradually increase the role of the private sector in the economy, the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply decided to float the prices of maize and barley, according to Ahmad Kreishan, secretary general for supply at the ministry.

The new measure is part of the ministry's efforts to remove the price ceiling on all food commodities

except wheat.

"When we reach a conviction that the private sector is capable to resume its role in dealing with a commodity, the ministry's role will be limited only to monitoring the price and quality of the product," Mr. Kreishan told the Jordan Times Saturday.

Last month, the ministry floated the prices of fruits and vegetables, but consumers complained that the decision has led to a considerable increase in

prices.

The public also described the floating of prices as detrimental to consumer interests especially those who regard fruits and vegetables as some of the least expensive foodstuffs.

Mr. Kreishan said that, however, the floating of prices will guarantee competition and lead to a positive impact on the consumers.

"The consumers should try to adapt to the new situation as this new mechanism has to take its time," Mr. Kreishan added.

Al Ra'i Arabic daily

quoted Industry, Trade and Supply Minister Hani Mulki as saying that the government will not let any sudden increase in international wheat prices affect the citizens, adding that wheat will continue to be a government imported commodity.

Dr. Mulki added that the private sector will still be allowed to import wheat.

Oil prices face more losses if OPEC restraint fails

LONDON (R) — Oil prices steadied Friday amid talk of thinner North Sea supply next month but analysts warned failure to rein in OPEC production and ample stocks would spark further losses in the medium term.

Benchmark Brent crude oil futures for June delivery settled 24 cents higher at \$18.93 a barrel in London, consolidating the week's 80-cent gains.

Traders said the prospect of a heavy June programme of maintenance work in the North Sea, which was expected to bite into the supply of Brent and other regional crudes, lent support to prices.

The Paris-based International Energy Agency (IEA) revised up its forecast of demand for oil from the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)

in the second quarter by 100,000 barrels per day (bpd), a result of delayed start-ups of new non-OPEC capacity and maintenance schedules.

But the IEA also forecast a trend-bucking increase in global supply in the second quarter "despite North Sea maintenance and seasonal declines in the U.S. and Canada."

Coming on top of a 220,000 barrels per day (bpd) rise in OPEC output in April, and the lowest fall in OECD industry stocks for any winter since 1991, further production growth was likely to tip prices lower again, the IEA said in its latest monthly market report.

"The absence of a stock-draw in the first quarter of 1997... is seen as a bearish signal for oil markets for the remainder of the year," the West's energy watchdog said.

The IEA said that member group produced 27.13 million bpd in April, leaving its own self-imposed but long-ignored ceiling of 25.03 million bpd even further behind.

Several OPEC ministers in Iran for a conference including the group's president, Libya's Abdullah Salem Al Badri, have called this week for the production ceiling to be frozen at the full ministerial meeting in Vienna next month and for individual members to exercise quota discipline.

The ministers warned that without plugging their leaky quota system sliding oil prices, which have shed about 25 per cent since the start of 1997, could fall further and put all 100 national producers on national budgets.

But analysts said the call for action, led by price-hawk Iran and Kuwait, one of only three core Gulf OPEC members keeping capacity in mothballs, would fall on deaf ears.

They saw little chance that OPEC's biggest quota busters, heavily represented at the conference by Venezuela and Nigeria, would stand by their renewed promise of collective restraint.

"They have taken the commercial road, invited in foreign investment and raised capacity. They're not going to sit on that capacity and hand back market share to non-OPEC," said an OPEC delegate.

"Even when prices fall OPEC won't cut... A prolonged period of oversupply is in prospect," said Geoff Pyne, oil analyst at UBS Global Research.

Growing supplies have been absorbed into storage so far this year but with stocks rising at around two million bpd, most companies will have put enough oil away by the end of June, analysts said. "Any boost to oil supplies that threatens to take stocks above the current lower desired level will cause prompt prices to fall sharply," said the Centre for Global Energy Studies in a report released Friday.

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Fastlink is the pioneer mobile telephone company in Jordan. Through the use of state-of-the-art technology and high quality service, it aims to provide Jordan with communication facilities necessary for advancing into the 21st century. After Promoseven is among a network of fourteen branches that make-up Fortune Promoseven's International group with operations and affiliations in the Middle East, Far East, Europe and the U.S. Fortune Promoseven provides advertising, marketing and public relations services for multinational clients as well as major local clients through the local offices.

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



REUTERS

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The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	ITL	FRF	ESP	PTA
US Dollar	1.0000	1.8885	0.6166	1.4233	120.03	1.3815	1671.60	1.3992	5.6905
DE Mark	0.5322	1.0000	0.3643	0.8430	71.08	0.8239	969.70	1.1248	3.3697
GB Sterling	1.6248	2.7350	1.0000	2.3070	196.30	2.2606	2715.51	3.0853	0.2442
CH Franc	0.7028	1.1855	0.4321	1.0000	84.30	0.9770	1173.63	133.35	3.9953
JP Yen	0.0083	1.4061	0.0125	1.1853	1.0000	1.1858	13.92	158.16	4.7389
CA Dollar	0.7185	1.2336	0.4461	1.0442	1.16	1.2220	1220.21	1.3884	4.1616
IT Lira	0.0008	1.0088	0.3680	0.8851	1394.51	0.8322	11.26	3.4032	1.1236
NL Guilder	0.5385	0.8847	0.3239	0.7494	63.15	0.7324	879.84	1.0936	2.9952
FR Franc	0.1757	0.2967	0.1081	0.25075	21.07	0.2445	33.37	33.3700	1.0000

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	ITL	FRF	ESP	PTA
US Dollar	1.0000	1.8885	0.6166	1.4233	120.03	1.3815	1671.60	1.3992	5.6905
Jordan Dinar	1.4124	2.5272	0.5324	1.2414	0.4280	5.1876	2173.02	4.7674	1.4124
GB Sterling	0.2686	0.4588	0.1005	0.97	0.8088	0.98	410.22	0.9038	0.2686
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	4.6781	0.9488	2.1441	8.65	0.8038	9.74	4081.23	8.9913
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.4845	0.1030	1.0303	0.8832	1.01	422.65	0.9311	0.2747
Kuwait Dinar	3.3003	5.9886	1.2776	2.9441	12.01	12.12	5077.58	0.9311	3.3003
Emirate Dinar	0.2723	0.4828	0.1021	1.0226	0.8911	0.9825	418.89	0.9229	0.2723
Lebanese/1000	0.85	1.5302	0.3477	0.8080	0.1989	2.3873	1.126	2.2031	0.85
Egyptian	0.2950	0.5208	0.1165	0.1112	1.0740	0.0894	1.0836	453.91	0.2950

Energy		Unit	Price
Brent	19.15	18.75	
W. Tera	20.40	20.30	
Bony	19.15	18.75	
Dubai	18.20	18.30	
UL Gas	192.00	192.00	

Mid-East Currencies		Unit	Price
SA Riyal	0.2686	0.4588	0.1005
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.4828	0.1021
KW Dinar	3.3003	5.9886	1.2776
BH Dinar	0.2770	0.48029	0.10292
CY Pound	1.9757	3.336	1.2158

Metal Prices		Unit	Price
Gold (oz's)	347.8	348.3	
Silver (oz's)	4.86	4.88	
Platinum (oz's)	390	391	
AL (3 Months)	1662	1685	
CU (3 Months)	2385	2390	
Zinc (3 Months)	1330	1334	
Lead (3 Months)	822	824	
NI (3 Months)	7800	7830	

Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)		Period	Rate
USD	5.58	5.58	5.61
GBP	6.06	6.25	6.50
JPY	0.53	0.50	0.55
DEM	2.88	2.94	3.00
FRF	3.23	3.39	3.48
CHF	1.50	1.56	1.71
ITL	6.53	6.77	6.72

Main Equity Indices		Index	Value	% Chg	High	Low	Pr Cls
New York	DOW JONES	7169.53	32.91	0.46	7196.02	7094.48	7136.62
New York	S&P 500	824.78	4.52	0.55	827.89	815.78	820.26
London	FTSE 100	4630.9	50.5	1.1	4646	4595.2	4580.4
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	19802.78	-289.03	-1.28	20146	19757.2	20061.8
Paris	CAC 40	2633.91	-0.4	-0.36	2650.96	2624	2643.31
Frankfurt	DAX	3882.41	10.43	0.29	3965.07	3851.9	3851.98

Energy		Unit	Price
Coffee (c/lbs)	241	Spot	
Cocoa (\$/ton)	1458	Spot	
Sugar (\$/ton)	317	Spot	
Wheat (\$/ton)	176	Spot	
Soya (c/lbs)	24.19	Spot	
Tea (stg/kg)	157	Spot	
Barley (\$/bsh)	0	Spot	
Rice (\$/ton)	480	Spot	

JOD Cross Rates		Currency	Buy	Sell
US Dollar	0.708	0.710		
GB Sterling	1.1486	1.1543		
DE Mark	0.4185	0.4206		
CH Franc	0.4965	0.499		
FR Franc	0.1243	0.1249		
JP Yen	0.5892	0.5921		
NL Guilder	0.3721	0.374		
IT Lira	0.423	0.4251		

* Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

THE Daily Crossword

ACROSS

- Surrounded by 5 Musical groups
- Gels started
- Peter Lorre character
- In regard to 16 Be unfraid
- Shelley product
- Fancy pastry
- Toward the mouth
- With "Don't," plea to the weatherman
- Muse number
- Kind of maid
- Argue frivolously
- Is an also-ran
- Malville opus
- Add salt and pepper
- Narrow bed
- Pour
- Terminus
- Chemical compounds
- A Fitzgerald
- Aisle attendant
- At a later time
- In short supply
- Do in
- "— stays mainly in the plain"
- Extreme anger
- Tree trunks
- "Bells on her —"
- Egyptian goddess
- Farewell, Pierre
- Pitcher
- Mosquito
- Della or Peeewe
- Pedestal section

DOWN

- Elec. unit
- Wasteland area
- Virginia willow
- Sovereignty
- Wand
- Have — to pick
- Standard
- Obligation
- Short distance
- Is extremely fond of
- Diamond weight
- Commerce
- Passover feast
- Zero
- Change for the better
- Central part
- "— for All Seasons"
- Nothingness
- Surgically useful beam
- Gravelly ridges
- Family members
- Obi
- Major end
- Young horse
- Flirt, in a way
- Ruler
- Jai alai player's item
- Caused to collapse
- Troubled condition
- European peak
- Denude
- Pursue
- Protection
- Leg joints
- Editor
- Construction worker's item
- Protuberance
- Nastase
- Hawkeye State
- Necessity
- Full house sign

SCABS	AWES	MSGT
ALOOP	VIVA	THEO
GUNLIVE	LAUGHING	
BEANERY	COOPTS	
ENS	AERO	
FLINTDEAD	PAIR	
LAVA	WEAL	DNA
UPON	SWANN	SLAV
WER	OAIS	TINE
PLYMOUTH	HARD	BED
ANTS	ASH	
SABINE	BRIOCHE	
WRITERS	ROAD	CELL
AGAR	NAIL	EXILE
POSE	EYED	SURED

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HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR SUNDAY, MAY 11, 1997

By Thomas S. Pierson,
Astrologer, Carroll
Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Try to be more cooperative with your fellow business associates today, and you can all progress more quickly. Let your superiors see your talents and thereby you can succeed greatly in the day ahead which will be desired.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Find a way to make your daily routines more productive today, and also more enjoyable. Invite a few friends to your home for the evening thereby you can make them feel comfortable by playing the perfect host.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Indulge yourself with some of your favourite pleasures today so that you are relaxed. Use your creative talents to further brighten a very memorable and happy day which can be spent with your loved ones if you so desire.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Straighten out any difficulties with your family today and make your home life more harmonious. Drive with the utmost care while on the highway and thereby you can eliminate any difficulties which you may encounter.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Be wary of missing any important appointments today which you may have forgotten. You should not become involved with any strangers later this evening or you could regret the entire situation for occurring.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) If you need some financial advice today, listen only to those persons who are reliable and successful. Enjoy a nice evening with your loved ones by relaxing for the days ahead which should be quite hectic if you are not prepared.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) This is a time when you can be quite successful at almost anything you attempt today, so don't be afraid to explore new avenues of expression. Later this evening will be good for meeting with close friends for some fun activities.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Try to gain the information today which can make some secret wish a reality. The truth would be very helpful later this evening in improving the situation at home with your loved ones so long as you don't alienate your loved ones.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) If you agreed to share some career activities with a friend today, stick to your word or risk alienating this person. Get plenty of rest later this evening so that you can tackle the obligations you have for the days ahead.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You can make some valuable new contacts today, and also improve your self esteem, by getting involved in some charitable civic affair which get recognised by your community and will lead to your success from a big-wig.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) A few of your good friends need your help today to make a project successful, so volunteer your services. The evening should be a happy one, so long as there won't be any difficulties with your loved ones which should be avoided.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Your intuition is working quite well at this time, so take advantage of that situation. Be more thoughtful and kind of your mate later this evening and thereby you can have a very romantic time with this person.

Birthingstone of May:
Emerald — Citrine

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic press

Shareholders want amendment to concession agreement between government and the Jordan Petroleum Refinery Company

****ALTHOUGH** JD5.7 million in cash dividends will be distributed by the Jordan Petroleum Refinery Company at an actual rate of 16 per cent, the general assembly, which approved the amount, called on the government to amend the concession agreement which governs dividends distribution and the company's operations mechanism.

The general assembly indicated that "the concession agreement does not correspond with the ambitions and expectation of the company to achieve a significant return based on a healthy and balanced relationship between all the production elements."

Board member Jamil Barakat demanded that the concession agreement be cancelled to enable the company operate on commercial bases. Stressing that such a step would benefit both the state treasury and the shareholders, Mr. Barakat said any dividends given to the shareholders do not correspond with the company's volume of activities and results of operations. Board member Ali Hindawi, who is an advisor at the Prime Ministry, said modifying the concession agreement and reconsidering it is a political decision that should be looked into by a committee to amend it with a view to satisfy shareholders' demands.

Board Chairman Abdul Majed Sboman told the general assembly that the company has recently sensed a response from the government to the efforts of the management to modify the concession agreement and find suitable solutions to the outstanding problems especially to the issue of dividends. He revealed that a draft agreement has been reached with the government and that it will be signed following the endorsement of the Cabinet. He pointed out that the draft agreement took into consideration when it was prepared the interest of the company so as not to overburden the company with additional obligations.

Referring to the large debts of major Jordanian entities, Mr. Sboman indicated that the Jordan Petroleum Refinery Company was withholding payments to the government for crude oil purchases equivalent to the dues owed to the refinery by the Royal Jordanian, the Armed Forces and the former Jordan Electric Authority which is now the National Electricity Company. He said the refinery could not continue financing the fuel supplies to the three aforementioned parties if they do not start paying the amounts they owe on time. Mr. Sboman said the refinery company has repeatedly requested Royal Jordanian to pay its obligations immediately but the airline has not responded. He indicated that the airline's debts amounted to JD69.67 million at the beginning of 1994 but the amount has risen by JD64.61 million to reach JD134.28 million at the end of 1996.

According to the annual report, the Jordan Petroleum Refinery Company recorded total sales of JD493.5 million during 1996. Out of this amount the company generated JD6.8 million net profit compared to JD6.6 million in 1995. Total assets amounted to JD380.4 million of which around JD222 million were current assets. Shareholders equity totalled JD58.4 million at the end of last year (Al Rai' + Al Aswaq).

Flexibility helps Britain win battle for Asian investment

BRUSSELS (AFP) — Labour market flexibility and an aggressive approach to attracting capital, rather than historical ties or the English language, have won Britain the lion's share of booming Asian investment in Europe, according to the authors of a major U.N. study.

The study reported that Britain has taken 40 per cent of all direct investment in the European Union (EU) from newly industrialised (Hong Kong, Korea, Taiwan, Singapore) or developing Asian countries (Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, China, India and Pakistan).

Total investment from these countries is already running at over a billion dollars a year. Their share of all investment in the EU has increased five-fold since 1985 and is set to go on rising sharply.

Germany, with an economy nearly twice as large as

Britain's, was second with 30 per cent of Asian inward investment, followed by the Netherlands with 20 per cent.

Padma Mallampally, a U.N. economist who worked on the report, said that while the use of English was frequently mentioned as a factor attracting investment to Britain, it was insignificant compared with basic cost considerations.

"The language barrier can be quite easily overcome if the economic inducement is sufficiently strong," she said.

The U.K. had been a lot more welcoming to foreign direct investment while its more flexible labour market, which makes it easier for companies to hire and fire workers and to make use of part-time labour, made out there more competitive than elsewhere in the EU.

"Flexibility definitely matters. Nowhere in western Europe is an option for com-

panies looking for low-wage labour but flexibility allows companies to ensure that costs are more closely linked to productivity," she said.

The report also highlights regulatory and other barriers in other EU states that have helped Britain to win the battle for investment capital, contributing to a tumbling unemployment rate that contrasts sharply with the rising jobless figures elsewhere in Europe.

These include, complex notification requirements in Belgium, France and Spain, rules dictating management styles in Scandinavia and Italy, and overly bureaucratic visa and residence permit procedures for company personnel throughout the EU.

The report also points to the gap between Britain and the rest of the EU, widening its share of investment from three of the four most advanced Asian economies

— Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan — to above 50 per cent.

It is these economies, along with Korea, that are expected to account for the bulk of the growth in Asian investment in Europe for the foreseeable future. Their combined outward investment flows have outstripped those of Japan since 1993.

In the longer term, however, Britain is likely to face greater competition, notably from the new democracies of central and eastern Europe.

Lower labour costs are making them an increasingly attractive destination for Asian manufacturers and the trend is likely to accelerate as countries like Poland and Hungary are brought into the European Union, the report says.

Korean car group Daewoo has already acquired plants in Poland and the Czech Republic.

Saudis to set up new petrochemical plant

RIYADH (AFP) — Saudi Arabia has said it would build a new petrochemical complex at a cost of around \$2.5 billion as part of its ongoing programme to expand its chemical industry.

The Saudi Yanbu Petrochemical Company (Yanpet), an affiliate of the industrial giant SABIC, has completed the engineering studies for the project, which would be launched in the third quarter of 1997.

The plant involves an ethylene cracker and other facilities with an annual production capacity of 800,000 tonnes of ethylene, 535,000 tonnes of polyethylene and 410,000 tonnes of ethylene glycol, said Ibrahim Ben Salamah, vice-chairman of SABIC (Saudi Arabian Basic Industries Corporation).

The project, to be ready in early 2000, will also produce 260,000 tonnes of polypropylene and 125,000 tonnes of pyrolysis gasoline.

Mr. Salamah said the project would make Yanpet one of the largest petrochemical complexes in the world, with a capacity of more than 1.6 million tonnes of ethylene and more than two million tonnes of derivative products.

"We and our partners reckon that Yanpet will

realise significant capital and operating savings by integrating the new cracker into the existing complex," Mr. Salamah said in a statement.

"This project will further strengthen SABIC's position in the international petrochemical and plastics market," he indicated.

The project was first announced in May 1996, when the engineering study was approved by SABIC and its partner in Yanpet, the Mobil Yanbu Petrochemical Company Inc., an affiliate of the U.S. Mobil Corporation.

It is part of SABIC's plans to increase its output capacity to take advantage of a projected growth in demand in Asia and other areas following the creation of the World Trade Organisation.

A SABIC official told AFP the expansions would boost Saudi Arabia's total production of petrochemicals, plastics, fertilisers and steel to 25 million tonnes in 2000 from around 20 million tonnes at present.

The Saudi government controls 70 per cent of SABIC's capital of 10 billion riyals (\$2.66 billion) while the rest is owned by individual investors from the world's top oil producer and its Arab Gulf neighbours.

China emerges as second largest personal computer market in Asia

TOKYO (AFP) — China ousted South Korea last year as the second largest market in Asia for personal computers, an industry monitoring group has said.

International Data Corp. (IDC) said in a statement that personal computer (PC) sales in Japan rose 39.1 per cent to 8.1 million units, followed by 2.12 million units in China, a rise of 38.9 per cent.

Sales of PCs in South Korea rose 30.4 per cent to 1.97 million units, while PC sales in Australia increased 14.8 per cent to 1.39 million units, IDC said.

Those four countries accounted for 80 per cent of PC sales in Asia, which saw overall sales rise 32.1 per cent to 16.98 million units last year.


Sales were pushed up by lower prices, the development of local markets, the low penetration level of such equipment and growing awareness of PC applications, U.S.-based IDC

said. "The maturation of China's PC market in 1996 is clearly one of the year's biggest stories," said Dane Anderson, PC research manager at IDC Asia-Pacific.

"China's PC market has already been identified by the world's largest PC vendors as one of the most important markets on the globe," Mr. Anderson said.

"High growth rates and increasing volumes will serve to accelerate this trend and establish an even more competitive market place," he said, adding: "Vendors that are not willing to take a long-term approach and invest substantial capital and resources in their (China) operations will certainly be left behind."

IDC forecast that 1997 would be a record year for the China market due to the low penetration level of PCs, at one for every 245 inhabitants, falling prices and the dynamic economy.

JORDAN FINANCIAL MARKET											
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 10/05/1997											
TEL: 607171 / 607179											
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 10/05/1997											
LAST 12 MONTHS HIGH		COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE		
<hr/>											
269,000 213,000		ARAB BANK	11.8	1.57	1	20	1110	258.50	258.50	-	
N	2,100	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	8	0.00	2	350	616	1.79	1.76	0.03	
	2,480	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	8.0	7.83	2	219	472	2.21	2.16	0.05	
	5,100	JOR. PETRO. CO.	14.2	0.00	2	750	847	4.77	4.74	0.03	
	2,950	JOR. EDU. BK.	18.5	0.00	10	8650	216708	2.86	2.81	0.01	
	1,050	JOR. CUL. BK.	4.7	8.86	2	1500	1185	1.80	1.79	0.01	
+	4,080	JOR. TEL. BK.	14.2	4.26	10	6180	1177	1.56	1.57	0.01	
	1,440	PHILLADEL. INV. BK.	9	0.00	5	1135	1277	1.12	1.13	0.01	
<hr/>											
BANK SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 192.27	CHG: -0.17	41	92496	235582					
<hr/>											
1,820	1,450	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	8.0	6.06	42	21974	26593	1.67	1.68	0.02	
5,080	4,100	JOR. TRNS. PWR.	10.0	2.00	2	100	480	4.62	4.80	0.18	
2,650	2,090	SHIPPING LINES	13.7	5.81	1	50	116	2.36			
1,480	930	RAIL. PORTFOLIO	9	0.00	6	1800	1782	0.99			
+	9,790	ALBA	7.4	7.25	2	150	1035	7.25	6.90	0.35	
	3,720	2,900	ARAB INTL. INV. MGMT.	7.9	0.00	4	2100	6342	2.02	1.92	
2,880	960	KARAK EDUCATION	W	0.00	5	5350	5190	0.97			
2,230	1,630	UNITED CO.	7.7	6.75	6	800	1304	1.63	1.63		
<hr/>											
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 104.38	CHG: +0.39	68	32324	52843					
<hr/>											
2,800	3,060	JOR. CHEM. FACT.	25.2	2.94	4	379	1414	3.78	2.74	0.02	
6,100	4,950	ARAB POTASH CO.	13.4	3.46	2	450	2595	5.70	5.78	0.08	
10,400	8,720	JOR. PETRO. SERV. CO.	9.0	9.53	4	230	2146	9.31	9.32	0.02	
3,260	1,660	INDUSTRIAL COS. COR.	9	0.00	13	9200	17660	1.83	1.82	0.01	
7,600	6,420	JOR. WORTED MILLS	10.6	3.05	1	1000	6550	6.50	6.55	0.04	
3,980	3,040	ARAB PHARM. MFG.	5.7	5.70	10	1170	4109	3.56	3.51	0.05	
7,280	2,650	JOR. CEMENT CO.	7.2	2.86	1	250	1750	7.10	7.06	0.04	
+	2,100	1,440	JOR. PAPER MFG.	17.2	8.59	2	400	572	1.44	1.43	0.01
	1,760	1,160	WALIA INDUSTRIES	9	0.00	2	500	565	1.16	1.13	0.03
960	450	LITEXCO & POLYMER	10.8	0.00	10	8000	4080	0.51			
1,870	540	NATIONAL INDUS.	8.3	10.71	1	4250	2380	0.55	0.56	0.01	
1,540	700	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.00	13	4400	3193	0.73	0.73		
1,670	1,130	ARAB PHARM. CO.	18.0	4.26	21	3200	9447	1.41	1.41		
2,660	1,410	UNIV. MOOD. INDUS.	P	0.17	2	1250	1863	1.49	1.49		
1,730	1,130	JOR. INDUS. RESOURCES	15.2	8.85	15	7050	7968	1.12	1.13		
1,230	840	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	15.9	0.00	9	1860	1618	0.87	0.87		
1,330	1,080	UNIV. TEL. & VIDEO	27.1	0.00	5	4618	5311	1.15	1.15		
1,400	960	UNION CB. & VEGA	28.8	0.00	2	2550	2321	0.91	0.91		
<hr/>											
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 114.80	CHG: +0.47	117	53473	74566					
<hr/>											
GRAND TOTAL		INDEX: 150.93	CHG: +0.11	226	170293	362392					
<hr/>											
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 10/05/1997											
<hr/>											
670	370	CENTRAL GEN. STORAGE	0.00	0.00	1	100	40	0.39	0.40	0.01	
+	770	JOR. TRNS. PWR.	10.9	0.00	5	4000	1846	0.42	0.41	0.01	
	840	UNION INV. 50%	0.00	0.00	1	500	85	0.67	0.67		
N	810	JOR. PETRO. SERV. CO.	9	0.00	10	6350	2858	0.44	0.45	0.01	
	950	AL-SHARQ INV. 75%	0.00	0.00	1	200	1536	0.52	0.53	0.01	
	980	AL-DALAYAT 75%	14.0	0.00	1	500	185	0.62	0.62	0.01	
	720	RAIL. PORTFOLIO	9	0.00	2	1600	810	0.50	0.51	0.01	
	810	WALIA INDUSTRIES	9	0.00	13	16500	9095	0.52	0.52	0.01	
1,280	850	ARAB PHARM. CO.	18.0	0.00	7	3350	2093	0.86	0.87	0.01	
770	850	RAIL. PORTFOLIO	9	0.00	4	2470	617	0.61	0.60	0.01	
620	790	INDUS. COS. COR.	25.9	0.00	4	3000	1260	0.41	0.41	0.01	
950	760	INDUS. COS. COR.	21.2	0.00	2	750	608	0.80	0.81	0.01	
820	590	RAIL. PORTFOLIO	9	0.00	3	16500	10742	0.67	0.68	0.01	
N	1,000	RAIL. PORTFOLIO 75%	9	0.00	1	100	70	1.00	1.00	0.05	
	670	830	RAIL. PORTFOLIO/AUCTION	7.3	0.00	8	6850	4521	0.66	0.66	0.01
		RAIL. PORTFOLIO/AUCTION	7.3	0.00	63	54362	362599	0.70	0.68	0.02	
<hr/>											
GRAND TOTAL				128	606807	399981					



"I think I've already been cloned. Haven't you noticed how much Tom Cruise and I look alike?"

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

ORXAB

DYKEE

WEFTES

WHALLO

Answer here: SHE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

by Henri Arnold and Mike Angillon

Dinner tonight? Can't, this manuscript is due tomorrow

WHY THE AUTHOR REFUSED HIS DINNER OFFER

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer tomorrow

Yesterday's Jumbles: ACUTE CRIME PAUNCH EQUATE
Answer: What she got when she married the fisherman - QUITE A CATCH!

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Rockets win 97-93 in Seattle as Heat outlast Knicks

SEATTLE (R) — Clyde Drexler sank a turnaround jumper from the left baseline with 18.5 seconds left and Hakeem Olajuwon added a key block as the Houston Rockets edged the Seattle SuperSonics 97-93 to take a 2-1 lead in their Western Conference semifinal series Friday.

Earlier, the Miami Heat, led by Tim Hardaway's 34 points, held off the New York Knicks 88-84 to even their best-of-seven series at a game apiece.

In Seattle, with neither team seizing control over much of the final two minutes of what had been a see-saw game, Drexler faked a burst to the basket, spun toward the baseline and sank the pivotal jumper with Delf Schrempf's hand in his face.

Houston coach Rudy Tomjanovich let Drexler play with five fouls. "I told Rudy I haven't fouled out all season long so the chances of me fouling out were pretty slim. Rudy had confidence in me and it all worked out."

The Sonics had a chance to tie the game and got the ball in deep to Shawn Kemp but Olajuwon blocked his shot attempt with 10 seconds to go. The ball bounced away, Charles Barkley ran it down and was fouled. He sank a pair of free throws to seal the victory.

"In the end we were able to pull it out," said Drexler, who called Olajuwon's block the key play of the game. "Just a great, great victory on the road."

Olajuwon had 24 points, while Drexler and Matt Maloney added 19 apiece for Houston. Game 4 is Sunday at Seattle.

Kemp and Gary Payton had 28 points apiece for the Sonics, who led by seven midway through the final period but were held scoreless over the final 2:25.

The Rockets won despite shooting 42 per cent from the field (33-of-77) and 33 per cent from three-point range (7-of-21).

The Sonics were worse



New York Knicks center Patrick Ewing (L), who had 17 points in the game, dunks the ball over Miami Heat center Alonzo Mourning in the fourth quarter of NBA playoff action at Miami Arena. The Heat defeated the Knicks 88-84 (Reuters photo)

from the field (39 per cent)

but held their own on the boards (43-42) and committed just eight turnovers.

Barkley finished with 17 boards for Houston, but missed 9-of-11 shots to finish with 11 points. Olajuwon, who made 8-of-12 shots from the field, finished with 11 rebounds and three blocks.

Kemp, who made 14-of-16 free throw attempts, led Seattle with 10 rebounds and five assists.

In Miami, Hardaway's only basket of the fourth quarter, a 15-footer with 49 seconds left, gave the Heat the lead for good.

A 10-foot baseline jumper by Allen Houston with 1:13 left gave New York, which trailed by seven at the 5:21 mark, its last lead at 84-83 and capped a 10-2 run. But Hardaway responded with his clutch shot from the foul line, giving him a playoff career-high and franchise-record 34 points.

"I made things happen," said Hardaway.

The Knicks had a chance to take the lead back, but Chris Childs missed a baseline layup after P.J. Brown prevented the New York point guard from passing in to center Patrick Ewing.

"I knew the last shot was going to be Ewing, but P.J. made a great defensive play and that was the end of that," said Hardaway.

Jamal Mashburn put the game out of reach with a three-pointer from the left wing with 2.9 seconds left as New York opted not to foul to stop the clock.

"I took the shot with confidence. It felt good leaving my hand," said Mashburn about his three-pointer.

Knicks coach Jeff Van Gundy explained his reasons for not fouling down the stretch.

"We didn't want to foul him, we still had timeouts, so we wanted to get a stop," he explained. "We would've been down by one, then we would've played for the last shot with four or five seconds to go."

Alonzo Mourning scored 24 for Miami.

Houston had 19 points and Ewing 17 for the Knicks, who lost for the first time in five playoff games this season.

The best-of-seven series moves to New York for the next two games. Game 3 is Sunday afternoon.

Samaranch supports Pusan's bid to host 2008 Olympics

PUSAN, South Korea (AP) — International Olympic Committee head Juan Antonio Samaranch has supported a controversial bid by Pusan, the home town of South Korea's President Kim Young Sam, to host the summer Olympics in 2008.

"Pusan could be a strong contender as a cause. South Korea has successfully hosted the 1988 Asian games and the 1988 Olympics."

Samaranch told Yonhap news agency here Friday. Samaranch was among dozens of officials at an international sports forum in Pusan.

Officials invited by Kim Young Sam, chief organizer of the second East Asian Games, which start on Saturday.

Disputes erupted this week among South Korean sports officials following Kim's surprise suggestion that Pusan should seriously consider bidding to host the 2008 summer Olympic games.

"Pusan will be fully able to stage the 2008 Olympics if it successfully stages the East Asian Games and the 2002 Asian Games," said Kim, an IOC member who helped South Korea beat Japan in a race to host the 1988 Olympics in Seoul.

The East Asian Games have been seen here as a dress rehearsal for the 2002 Asian Games, but civic groups and even some South Korean officials questioned Pusan's ability to host the event.

They charged that South Korea were overspending on sports events, with its economy faltering.

"I don't understand why we have to spend taxes on various international sports events," a Pusan taxi driver complained.

Kim Young Sam said that austerity was the main theme of his program for the East Asian games, saying Pusan had built modern facilities for the Games.

"In fact, we already have the capability to host an international sports event as it was proved in 1988," Kim told the Korean Herald, a Seoul-based English newspaper, on Saturday.

Bjorkman, Stoltenberg in Coral Springs semis

CORAL SPRINGS (R) — Top seed Jonas Bjorkman of Sweden and 11th seed Jason Stoltenberg of Australia, the two remaining seeds, advanced to the semi-finals at the America's red clay tennis championship Friday.

The 23rd-ranked Bjorkman defeated 30th-ranked Juan Albert Viloca of Spain 6-4 7-6 (7-2) in a quarter-final encounter.

Stoltenberg, the defending champion, recovered from a momentary lapse in the second set to take a 6-1 7-5 win over 63rd-ranked American qualifier David Witt in 68 minutes.

Still making it surprising results, 19th-ranked American qualifier Steve Campbell continued his march through the draw, earning a 6-1 6-3 victory over 88th-ranked Sargis Sargsian of Armenia.

Campbell, who upset Jim Courier in the first round of last week's tournament in Atlanta for his "biggest win ever," is now into his first semi-final of the ATP Tour.

"At the beginning of last week, I started to have a loose mindset," Campbell said. "I've kept it up for the whole two weeks. Everyone I've played is ranked ahead of me, so for me there's nothing to lose."

In the semi-finals, Bjorkman will face the newly impressive Campbell. The only other time the two played, at the Japan Open in 1995, Bjorkman delivered a two-set tennis lesson.

The other semi-final finds the 32nd-ranked Stoltenberg looking for his second consecutive final berth at the red clay 75th-ranked Johan Van Herck of Belgium.

Van Herck defeated 80th-ranked Australian Mark Woodforde 3-6 6-2 6-3 in the last quarter-final pairing.

One of the rare serve-and-volleyers left on the tour, Bjorkman won an impressive 64 per cent of the points when his first serve went in during the one-hour, 23-minute match.

"The game is improving and all of the guys are returning better, but my serve is good and I am moving well," Bjorkman said. "I won about 70 to 80 per cent of my first serve."

Stoltenberg, who spent the year mostly following wrist surgery in December, reached the semi-finals of Orlando two weeks ago and the finals of Atlanta last week.

Italian Open: New Swiss star upsets Sanchez to meet Martinez

ROME (AP) —

Switzerland discovered another teenage tennis star on Friday night when Parry Schryder beat an ailing Arantxa Sanchez Vicario 6-1, 6-4 to reach the Italian Open semi-finals.

World No. 1 Martina Hingis missed the tournament after falling off a horse, but 18-year-old Schryder flew the Swiss flag here — and now meets Spain's defending champion Conchita Martinez.

Crowd favorite, Mary Pierce of France, who sensationally knocked out top seed Monica Seles on Thursday night, will meet Austria's Barbara Raus in the other match on the center court.

"I felt it go, and afterwards I didn't have the strength for my service or my forehand," the Spaniard revealed. "At one stage it was really hating and I did think about stopping."

"But I'm a professional and despite the pain, I thought I had to carry on — for the crowd's sake and because, you never know, by some miracle I might have won. I never want to leave a tournament like that."

Sanchez Vicario, who had treatment from a trainer during the match, refused to blame the result on her injury.

"Schryder played very well, she got to the ball early and played it long," she said. "I'm not making any excuses — my opponent played better than me."

Sanchez Vicario, who had treatment from a trainer during the match, refused to blame the result on her injury.

"Schryder played very well, she got to the ball early and played it long," she said. "I'm not making any excuses — my opponent played better than me."

South Africa's Joannette Kruger returns a ball to Spain's defending champion Conchita Martinez during their Italian Open quarter-final match. Martinez won the match 6-0 6-4 (Reuters photo)



Spain's defending champion Conchita Martinez looks at the ball as she prepares to return a backhand to South Africa's Joannette Kruger during their Italian Open quarter-final match. Martinez won the match 6-0 6-4 (Reuters photo)

and all credit to her. "It's just a shame because I had been playing well in this tournament."

Schryder, ranked 51st in the world but who had dismissed South African sixth seed Amanda Coetzer here in the third round, showed remarkable power and precision in her strokes.

"I've been in good shape this week, and I thought that anything was possible tonight," said Schryder.

"I've beaten some good players before and I think I'm on the right track. This will give me the motivation to work hard and to go on from here."

As for the match against Martinez, Schryder added: "She's on good form, she's won here four times and I'll just have to try have to do my best."

Martinez stayed on course for her fifth consecutive title, with a lacklustre 6-0, 6-4 win over South Africa's Joannette Kruger.

The third seeded Spaniard would have been off court even sooner had it not been for a lapse of concentration as she led 2-0 in the second set.

Pierce, who beat Romania's Ruxandra Dragomir 6-3, 6-4, will be the clear favourite for the other semi-final at the Foro Italico.

Pierce, using her big-hitting style to good effect on the clay court, made the decisive break in the first set for 4-2, sending a barrelling forehand deep into the far corner.

Both women lost their service games early in a hard-fought second set, but Pierce made the crucial break at the second attempt for 4-3 with a stinging two-fisted backhand across the court.

"I felt I could have played a lot better," Pierce said. "But I did what I needed to do to win."

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH GOREN SHARF & YAMANI HIRSCH
CHIEF TRUMP: MARK SHARF, Ph.D.

ANSWERS TO WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q. 1 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:

AAJ854 CJ OKJ4 AJ784

The bidding has proceeded:

NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST

1♠ 1♥ 1♠ 1♥

What action do you take?

A - Partner is telling you that your side has play for the game even if you have only six points and four spades. You have considerably more and your best move to investigate is to show your diamond support by bidding five diamonds.

Q. 2 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:

AAKQJ QJ105 QJ8 AKQ105

What is your opening bid?

A - You have 17 points, good intermediate and a balanced hand — it sounds like a textbook one-trump. The fly in the ointment is that you have two suits unguarded, one more than is permitted. Our choice is one club.

Q. 3 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:

AAQ1088 QVaid QAK QJ1088

The bidding has proceeded:

SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST

1♠ 1♥ 1♠ 1♥

What do you bid now?

A - Whether you play limit or forcing jump raises, you should be interested in slam. The sensible method to investigate is via cue-bidding, and it is normal to show your lowest-ranking control first. There is no need to depart from this practice. Bid four diamonds.

Q. 4 - East-West vulnerable, as South you hold:

AAQ1088 QVaid QAK QJ1088

The bidding has proceeded:

SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST

1♠ 1♥ 1♠ 1♥

What do you bid now?

A - Many would bid three no-trump, but that is our second choice. There's no reason why partner, on this auction, cannot have four hearts — North's distribution could be 1-4-5-3, or 1-4-4-4. Our vote goes to three hearts; it cannot cost to pattern out the hand in search of a possible slam.

TODAY PHILADELPHIA Johnie Depp...in NICK OF TIME Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	PHILADELPHIA Demi Moore...in INDECENT PROPOSAL Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	PHILADELPHIA Kevin Reeves...in CHAIN REACTION Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 Top Disney production 101 DALMATIANS Shows: 12:30, 5:00	CONCORD Winner of 9 Oscars THE ENGLISH PATIENT Shows: 12:00, 3:00, 6:00, 9:00 Concord - 2* Michael Jordan...in SPACEJAM Shows: 3:30, 6:00	Habib & Hisham's Theatre TEL. 625155 The political satire AMN YA HO For reservations call 625155

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Swimmer delays Cuba-to-U.S. bid

HAVANA (AFP) — Rough waters have delayed Australian distance swimmer Susie Maroney's plans to become the first person to finish a Cuba-to-Florida solo run. The 22-year-old Maroney had planned to set out on the estimated 40-50 hour venture early on Friday but her team, gauging critical currents and chopiness in the Florida straits, put off the decision on when she should start. Last year, rough waters in the strait generated a lot of turbulence in her shark-protection cage. After a gruelling attempt in which she fractured her wrists and lost 11 kilos, she retired in U.S. waters but before reaching Florida. After a year of training 25 kilometres a day, she plans to set out from Havana's seafront Malecon on a voyage of about 190-200 kilometres, possibly to Key West. No stranger to records, Maroney holds the Guinness women's record for 24 hour distance swimming (93 kilometres), the record for both sexes for the around-Manhattan swim and the fastest round-trip English Channel run.

Cipollini hailed as conqueror

MONTHEY, Switzerland (AFP) — Italian sprint specialist Mario Cipollini won his second successive stage of the Tour of Romandy here on Friday though the peloton had to shelter from a four minute hailstorm. The 30-year-old Cipollini, known as the 'Italian stallion' for his playboy image despite since getting married, won the third stage in a tight sprint finish overhauling Czech Jan Svoboda and another Italian Massimo Strazzer — Dutchman Erik Breukink took the leader's green jersey and leads previous holder Chris Boardman by a second. "I timed it perfectly hiding in the peloton with 150 metres to go and then I pounced," Cipollini said. The 33-year-old Breukink, third in the 1990 Tour de France, was pleased to be in the lead but was more concerned with the weather conditions which had forced the peloton to take cover under a bridge, after only going 17km, during a four minute hailstorm. "It wasn't a great day because of the appalling weather conditions but it's still good to have taken the overall lead at a bonus sprint as I thought Chris might do well at those," Breukink said. The weather was so bad that the organisers shortened the course by a dozen kilometres though it didn't stop two of the leading riders Frenchman Luc Leblanc and Marco Pantani of Italy retiring. Their retirements had more to do with avoiding injury ahead of the Tour of Italy which starts in just over a week.

Steward to train De La Hoya

BIG BEAR LAKE, California (AFP) — Oscar De La Hoya has made Emanuel Steward his third trainer since 1995, dumping Jesus Rivera after lacklustre triumphs over Pernell Whitaker and Miguel Angel Gonzalez. The unbeaten 24-year-old American fighter defends his World Boxing Council (WBC) welterweight crown on June 14 in San Antonio against David Kama. De La Hoya is 24-0 with 20 knockouts. Kama is 28-1 with 21 knockouts. De La Hoya is training here for the bout with Steward, who has worked with several champions, among them Thomas "the hitman" Hearns. "He has got the most natural talent since Sugar Ray Leonard," Steward said of De La Hoya. "The kid can punch, box and he is fast. What impresses me are his eyes. He transforms himself into a cold-blooded killer." Rivera, 65, was lacking in the offensive fighting skills that are Steward's trademark. "De La Hoya" had been unhappy for quite some time," said Steward, who was brought in by promoter Bob Arum. "He said, 'Emanuel, I want to become the greatest fighter ever.'" Steward's aim is to improve De La Hoya's right jab plus make him stronger and more aggressive for future foes Hector Camacho and Wilfredo Rivera.

Entrepreneur to run Irish Derby

DUBLIN (R) — English 2,000 Guineas winner Entrepreneur was on Friday among the 143 horses declared for the Irish Derby which will be run at the Curragh on June 29. Two Russian-trained horses, Kabardin Star and Dan, have also been declared to run in the one-and-a-half mile (2.4 km) Irish classic. Michael Stoute, trainer of Entrepreneur, has won the Irish Derby three times with Shergar in 1981, Sharief Dancer in 1983 and Shahrastani in 1986.

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Michael Schumacher of Germany waves to supporters from the pits during time trials for the Monaco Grand Prix. The race takes place May 11 (Reuters photo)

Capello heads for AC Milan after quitting Real Madrid

MILAN (AFP) — Fabio Capello looks certain to return to AC Milan next season, after announcing that he is quitting as coach of Real Madrid to go back to a job he knows well.

Capello guided Milan to four Italian League titles and one European Cup in his five seasons as coach, before leaving last season summer to take real to the top of the Spanish table.

In his absence, Milan have had a disastrous season — floundering in the wrong half of the Serie A after a string of defeats and failing to even get past the group phase of the Champions League.

Capello said: "I've had a lot of offers from Spain, Italy, England and Ger-

many, but I've chosen — without actually having signed anything — to return to a job that I know well.

"I don't want to talk about it now. I'm very sad to have to leave Madrid and Real. I know that several of the players are trying to get president Lorenzo Sanz to make me stay.

"I would like to have won the European cup a second time with Real, and to have won the intercontinental cup with them. But to do that, it's vital to be in total harmony with the club's top officials."

Asked if Milan President Silvio Berlusconi's offer to come back was simply too good to turn

down, Capello said: "The problem I had was with real, not with Milan."

"I will reveal everything when we're mathematically certain of winning the championship. It's a pact I made with Sanz."

As for what he will bring back to Italy from Spain, Capello said: "A more marked taste for south American-styled football, so I can build a team where every player knows how to score goals and gets the chance to do so."

"At Real, apart from the goalkeepers, everyone has managed it," he said.

Italy has long been rife with speculation over Capello's return here.

However, that speculation heightened with a

recent trip he made to his Milan home, ostensibly to see his wife and family and to sort out some legal and business affairs.

Milan sacked Uruguayan coach Oscar Tabarez in December, after a humiliating 3-2 defeat to relegation candidates Piacenza, the latest in a string of poor results at the time.

However, the situation has only got worse under Arrigo Sacchi, who returned to Milan after coaching the Italian national squad, and who had won two European Cups with them in 1989 and 1990.

Mariners power past Orioles as Royals beat Yankees 7-5

BALTIMORE (R) — Joey Cora had a career-high five hits, including a solo home run, and Ken Griffey Jr added his league-leading 15th homer and four RBI to power the Seattle Mariners past the Baltimore Orioles 8-2 on Friday.

The diminutive Cora went 5-for-5 with three singles, a double and his second homer of the season. In his last five games, Cora is 11-for-19 (.578). He has hit safely in his last 11 starts.

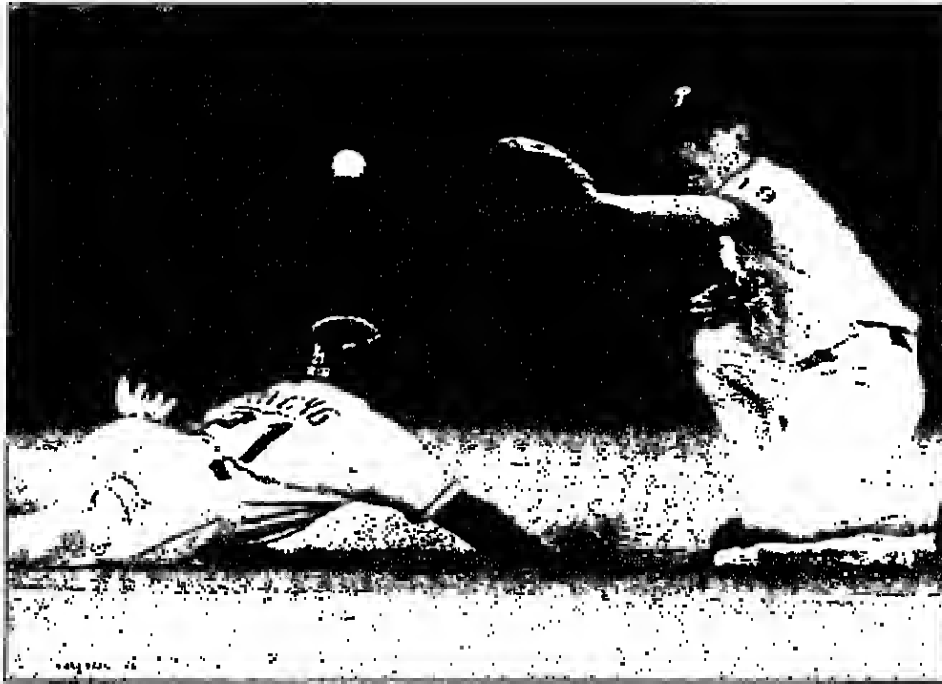
"My fifth time up at bat, I was thinking about a fifth hit," said Cora. "I'm excited that it happened. Our team is winning, and that is even more exciting."

Seattle, whose 11-5 road record is the best in the American League, broke open a 3-0 game in the fourth inning on Griffey's three-run homer. It moved Griffey past Tino Martinez of the Yankees for the league lead, while his four RBI placed him second behind Martinez with 39.

Jamie Moyer (3-0) improved to 4-0 against his former team, allowing two runs and six hits in 6 1/3 innings, while striking out eight.

"I had good movement," Moyer said. "The Orioles are a tough club and in this park anything can happen. Things happen, but you just have to concentrate on making your pitches."

B.J. Surhoff, who is hitting .416 (25-for-60) over his last 16 games, had a solo homer for the Orioles, whose three-game win streak ended.



Colorado Rockies Eric Young (21) dives back to second base as Philadelphia Phillies shortstop Kevin Stocker (19) covers second base during the top of the first inning in Philadelphia. Young eluded the tag on the attempted pick off (Reuters photo)

Rocky Coppinger (1-1) got the loss, surrendering five runs and eight hits in three innings.

In New York, shortstop Derek Jeter's throwing error in the top of the 12th inning allowed Tim Lincecum to score the go-ahead run as the Kansas City Royals rallied past the Yankees 7-5 for a controversial victory.

Jeff King added an RBI double in the 12th for the Royals, who scored three runs in the sixth after an incorrect call by third-base umpire Dale Ford with two out opened the door.

With a play in progress, Ford called Jay Bell out

thinking incorrectly he had passed Jose Offerman on the basepaths. That stopped the play with Bell apparently about to be caught in an inning-ending rundown.

After a conference, the umpires allowed the Royals to keep batting with Bell on third and King on second — and Chili Davis singled them both in.

Jeter had a two-run homer for New York.

In Chicago, Dave Martinez's two-out single to right scored Norberto Martin with the winning run in the bottom of the 10th as the White Sox edged the Oakland Athletics 3-2 for their

fourth win in five games.

The White Sox took advantage of a key error by third baseman Dave Magadan to score the game-winner.

Frank Thomas continued his torrid hitting with two more hits for Chicago. He has 20 hits in his last 40 at-bats and has raised his average to .348. In Milwaukee, Cal Eldred rebounded from a poor start with seven strong innings and Mark Loretta and Jose Valentin each had two hits and an RBI as the Brewers beat the Anaheim Angels 5-4.

Eldred (4-3) allowed two runs and eight hits with four

strikeouts and a walk, Doug Jones worked out of a jam in the ninth to record his seventh save.

Darin Erstad led off with a homer for Anaheim, which suffered its third straight loss.

In Boston, Bobby Witt threw a five-hitter to become the American League's third sixth-game winner and Rusty Greer, Juan Gonzalez, Will Clark and Dean Palmer all drove in runs with two out in the fifth inning as the Texas Rangers defeated the Red Sox, 5-1.

Witt (6-0) joined Andy Pettite of the Yankees and Jimmy Key of the Orioles with six wins. He walked one and struck out five for his 42nd career complete game. Witt also tied Ferguson Jenkins for second on the Rangers' all-time list with 93 wins.

In Minnesota, Pat Hentgen dominated the Twins for the

second straight start and Carlos Delgado and Benito Santiago had run-scoring singles in the second inning as the Toronto Blue Jays posted their sixth win in seven games, 4-1.

Hentgen (3-1), who pitched a four-hit shutout against Minnesota on Sunday, allowed one unearned run and six hits over eight innings. He walked one and struck out five to improve to 9-1 lifetime against the twins. Hentgen has not allowed an earned run in his last 21 innings.

In Detroit, Charles Nagy pitched a seven-hitter for his first shutout in nearly 20 months and David Justice and Matt Williams bopped as the Cleveland Indians blanked the Tigers 5-0. Nagy struck out 11 and walked two en route to his first shutout since September 1995 against the Yankees.

AMERICAN LEAGUE

Texas	5	Boston	1
Cleveland	5	Detroit	0
Seattle	8	Baltimore	2
Kansas City	7	NY Yankees	5 (In 12)
White Sox	3	Oakland	2 (In 10)
Milwaukee	5	Anaheim	4
Toronto	4	Minnesota	1

NATIONAL LEAGUE

Florida	3	Houston	2
Philadelphia	3	Colorado	1
Pittsburgh	9	Atlanta	0
NY Mets	10	St Louis	3
Los Angeles	5	Montreal	1
Cincinnati	7	San Diego	2
Chicago Cubs	5	San Francisco	3 (In 14)

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Sudanese peace agreement places multi-party system back on political agenda

KHARTOUM (AFP) — A recent peace accord with six rebel groups in southern Sudan, has placed the issue of restoring a multi-party system firmly back on the political agenda after a ban of eight years.

At public meetings and in the press, academics, writers and members of parliament close to the country's military-Islamist regime, have begun speaking openly about a return to multi-party politics.

The debate was triggered by the signature on April 21 of a peace agreement with the mainstream rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) of John Garang which has been fighting for more than a decade to throw off domination by the Arab and Muslim north.

The accord gave the green light for a multi-party system in the mainly Christian and animist south of the country. The result was that northerners eager to restore political plurality immediately insisted that the north should benefit from the same right.

"It is unacceptable, logically, lawfully and politically, to grant the southerners the freedom to form political organisations and deny the

northerners this right," said Dr. Tayeb Zein Abidin, a political science lecturer, in an interview.

Dr. Mohammad Nuri Amin, another lecturer at the International African University, said he believed democracy should be exercised through a multi-party system rather than through the existing National Congress dominated by Islamists.

Ahmad Abdul Rahman Mohammad, of the Islamic National Front, said the multi-party system was "the closest one to the cultural (Muslim) orientation."

"It is difficult to continue, over a long period of time, the tutelage and predominance by a group of citizens over the people," Mr. Mohammad said in a recent press interview. He said political plurality was "indispensable for Third World countries, particularly Sudan."

He suggested that a multi-party system could be restored gradually, beginning with political fora. Dr. Isam Ahmad Bashir, a member of parliament and an Islamic thinker, said in a press article that political plurality was "consistent with the ethnic, cultural and

religious diversity that is endorsed by Islam."

He argued that the multi-party system had been endorsed by several international Islamist movements, including the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, the Islamic Action Front in Jordan, the Islah Party in Yemen, the Welfare Party in Turkey and the Islamic Salvation Front in Algeria.

Another Islamist academic, Hassan Melki said Sudan was "heading for a multi-party system."

In an interview carried Thursday in the independent Akhbar Al Yom newspaper, he said that as a result of the recent peace agreement, an Islamist-African party would be formed to include Islamist supporters of the present government and southerners who have signed the agreement.

He said such an alliance of northern Islamists and southerners would "be capable of confronting an Afro-Zionist trend" that he said was emerging in the great lakes region comprising Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, Zaire, Burundi and Rwanda. Sudan's military leader Omar Bashir dissolved all political parties after seizing power in a 1989 coup.



Crowds welcome Pope John Paul II by throwing rice as his convoy makes its way to the presidential palace in Beirut on Saturday. The Pope arrived in Lebanon to a warm welcome from the authorities and people. He immediately issued a veiled call for the departure of Israeli and Syrian troops (see story on page 1) (Reuters photo)

Election campaign launched in Iran

TEHRAN (AFP) — The campaign for Iran's May 23 presidential election officially opened Saturday amid calls by the state-run media for a massive turnout in a vote described as "critical to the future of the country."

Four candidates are vying to replace President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, who is ineligible to run again having served the maximum two, four-year terms allowed under the constitution.

A total of 238 people signed up to run for president but the candidacies of only four were retained by the decision-making Council of the Guardians. The other 234 were disqualified for failing to meet ideological and professional requirements.

Parliamentary Speaker Ali Akbar Nateq Nuri, 54, and former Culture Minister Mohammad Khatami, also 54, representing respectively the social conservatives and a coalition of Islamist moderates and left-wing radicals, are considered the favourites.

The two others, former Intelligence Minister Mohammad Mohammadi Reza Zavarzi, 54, and former Justice Minister Reza Zavarzi, are seen as outsiders.

Three of the four approved candidates are clerics and all of them are loyal to the regime, although they represent different factions. State-run television and radio and religious leaders have stepped up calls on the population in recent days to turn out and vote in large numbers. "This election is critical to the future of the country," the state media said.

Campaign posters and pictures of the two leading candidates appeared on the main streets of Tehran early Saturday.

The four candidates are allowed to make 30-minute campaign speeches twice a day on state radio for two days during the election campaign. Mr. Nuri is scheduled to make the opening speech Saturday.

Iran's paramount leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei sketched the boundaries for the campaign Wednesday, barring any conciliatory gesture towards the West.

"Our people will not vote for a candidate who shows the least sign of leniency towards the United States, Western interference and cultural invasion," he warned.

Although the campaign officially kicked off Saturday, the two leading candidates, Mr. Nuri and Mr. Khatami, have been exchanging bitter accusations for several weeks.

Campaigning is scheduled to end 24 hours before the May 23 vote.

Turkey's ruling party targets journalists and labour leaders

ANKARA (AFP) — Turkish Justice Minister Sevket Kazan of the Islamist Welfare Party, has ordered magistrates to investigate eight journalists and two labour leaders, for allegedly "inciting" soldiers to stage a coup.

The journalists targeted by Mr. Kazan, work for dailies owned by the country's two biggest press groups, according to a report to be published Saturday in the daily Cumhuriyet.

The leaders of these groups, Aydin Dogan and Dinc Bilgin have lately been high critical of the Islamist-leaning government of Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan.

Official sources quoted in the Cumhuriyet report said the journalists included Fatih Cekirge, of the popu-

lar daily Sabah belonging to Mr. Bilgin's group in Ankara and Bekir Coskun, of the politically central Hurriyet daily owned by Mr. Dogan. Salih Memecan a caricaturist working for Sabah is also in the group.

The union militants were named as Semset Denizir, secretary-general of the Turk-Is (Turkish Workers') Union and Mustafa Basoglu, the chairman of Saglik-Is (Health Workers') Union.

Since January, friction between the Islamist government and the army has fuelled speculation that the army might intervene to protect the country's secular traditions.

Military leaders have accused the government of undermining the secular principles on which the modern Turkish republic

was founded in 1923 by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk.

On Feb. 28, the powerful National Security Council (MGK) which groups the most senior civilian and military authorities, instructed the government to take stern measures to stop the trend towards Islamisation.

The Welfare Party is campaigning strongly against these measures. Welfare leaders have warned against moves to close down Islamist secondary schools which the party is relying on to form its future cadres.

"If you close religious secondary schools, there will be bloodshed," said Halil Ibrahim Celik quoted by Sabah. "If this happens, Turkey will become a second Algeria, or the situation will be worse than in Algeria," Mr. Celik said.

Iraq complains about not receiving a single medicine shipment

GENEVA (AFP) — Health conditions in Iraq are dire, the country's health minister said Friday, protesting Baghdad has not received a single shipment of medicine under the U.N. oil-for-food deal.

"Not a single tablet or syringe or injection has reached Iraq," since December, Iraqi Health Minister Umid Medhat Muharak told journalists at a briefing here.

The deal that came into effect late last year under U.N. Security Council Resolution 986 allows Baghdad to buy \$1.3 billion of humanitarian food and medicine with the proceeds of Iraqi oil sales.

Some \$210 million is earmarked for medical imports. But out of 500 humanitarian contracts put forth for approval, only 28 contracts worth \$27 million have been accepted by the U.N., Mr. Muharak said.

Mr. Muharak has previously accused Washington and London of deliberately blocking the implementation of food and medicine contracts under the oil-for-food structure which allows Iraq to pump \$2 billion worth of Iraqi petrol over a six-month period.

Medical donations from "friendly countries" during the embargo provided around eight to ten per cent of Iraq's medical needs but these inputs stopped arriving after the signing in May of the memorandum of understanding between the U.N.

and Iraq on the technicalities of the deal.

The international community imposed a sanctions regime on Iraq after its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Under U.N. resolutions agreed at the end of the 1991 Gulf war, Iraq must implement disarmament and other resolutions before the oil and trade embargo can be fully lifted.

Mortality rates among children have escalated, Mr. Muharak said, with 8,000 children over five years old dying every month compared to 1,600 before Iraq was put on the trade blacklist.

Malnutrition and lack of clean water were major causes of death. Some 95 per cent of Iraq's population had access to clean drinking water before the Gulf war, compared to 21 per cent currently, Mr. Muharak said.

Iraq faced a desperate shortage of all medicine and equipment spare parts, which resulted in the use of only 30 to 40 per cent of its 30,000 hospital beds.

Infectious diseases such as cholera, polio and hepatitis had returned to plague Iraq and malaria was a menace to the north and east of the country, the Iraqi health minister said.

World Health Organisation chief Hiroshi Nakajima said in February during a visit to the country that Iraq's health system was close to collapse.

Experts point finger at mummy's murderers

LONDON (AFP) — A former Scotland Yard police detective and a medical expert have teamed up to explain one of the world's oldest unsolved deaths — that of the Egyptian boy king Tutankhamun, it was reported Saturday.

Tutankhamun died at the age of 21 in 1352 BC after ruling for nine years and his tomb and mummified body were discovered buried in the Valley of the Kings in Egypt in 1922. His young death has aroused intense speculation ever since.

Now X-rays of the king's skull by retired British neurology professor Ian Isherwood have revealed a fracture in the back of the skull, which he said was most likely caused by a blow to the head, the Independent newspaper reported, quoting a "historic murder squad" brought together by the magazine museums and galleries.

"During mummification you often get (this sort of injury) in limbs but not in the skull," he said.

The motive was supplied by former London detective inspector Graham Melvin, who names his prime suspects as Ay, the king's vizier, and General Horemheb, the head of the army.

Ay took over the throne when Tutankhamun died and married his widow. When Ay died, Horemheb succeeded him and destroyed all monuments to the young Pharaoh and removed his name from the list of kings.

"Ay was old. They agreed that he'd take over, and Horemheb knew when Ay was dead, he could do as he liked," Mr. Melvin said.

U.N.'s torture report 'hypocritical' — Israel

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — Israel Friday lashed out at the U.N. Committee Against Torture for calling on the Jewish state to stop using torture in its interrogation of Palestinian detainees.

"Israel only uses methods that are employed throughout the world in the war against terrorism, and to single out Israel is hypocritical," said David Bar Ilan, aide to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

The committee said the 1987 Convention Against Torture, to which Israel is a signatory, ruled out invoking the threat of terrorism as justification for cruel treatment and told Israel to report back on concrete steps taken by Sept. 1.

Mr. Bar Ilan said such moves by the committee "sentences to death future innocent victims of terrorism."

Militant suicide bombers have killed scores of Israelis in attacks.

Israel's Landau Commission on the matter allows for "moderate use of physical pressure" during some interrogations.

Nili Arad, director-general of Israel's justice ministry, said applying the rules of the

Landau Commission had helped investigators foil 90 plans for large-scale terrorist attacks.

The U.N. committee listed seven interrogation methods which "appear to be applied systematically" and said Israel had neither confirmed nor denied reports of their use. "The committee therefore, must assume them to be accurate," it said.

But the Israeli ambassador to Switzerland, Yosef Landan, rejected the committee's conclusions, saying they were based on the "hearsay evidence" of non-governmental organisations.

"It is absolutely not the case that Israel uses torture or any methods tantamount to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment in interrogating suspected terrorists," Mr. Landan said in a statement. "Israel has nothing to hide on this issue."

Amnesty International and other human rights groups who interviewed people interrogated by Israel's security services said methods including hooding, sleep deprivation for prolonged periods, violent shaking and even death threats.

Peter Burns, a Canadian professor who is the com-

mittee's rapporteur investigator on Israel, told Reuters: "Individually and in combination the methods constitute torture. Clearly they are cruel and degrading."

Bent Sorensen, a Danish doctor and vice-chairman of the committee, said the conclusions were also based on "medical evidence" contained in autopsy reports as well as official Israeli court records showing length of sleep deprivation.

"Typical is 46 hours interrogation, two hours rest, then 36 hours interrogation, two hours rest," he said.

Dr. Sorensen cited the example of a detainee who died in 1995 during interrogation. His autopsy was seen by professor Dale Pounder, a top forensic expert, who attributed death to brain damage caused by shaking, a controlled method of torture.

Mr. Burns said that the committee could not accept Israel's "defence of necessity" to justify cruel methods.

"To avoid this kind of moderate pressure while interrogating terrorists is to ensure the death of scores if not hundreds of innocent civilians," Mr. Bar Ilan replied.

Israel questions whether U.S. is tapping embassy phones

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israeli media voiced suspicions Thursday that Washington is tapping the Israeli embassy's phones, following a report that the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is investigating whether Israel has a U.S. government informant.

Wednesday, the Washington Post reported that the FBI was investigating whether a senior U.S. official has been passing sensitive information to the Israeli government. The inquiry reportedly stemmed from an intercepted conversation between two Israeli intelligence officials in Washington and Tel Aviv. Israeli officials denied the report, insisting Israel does not spy on its American ally.

The allegation is "wrong, factually, in one respect — the part alluding to Israeli intelligence-gathering in the United States," government spokesman Moshe Fogel said.

On Thursday, Israeli newspapers were filled with speculation that the United States was tapping phone calls and deciphering Israeli intelligence codes. If so, wrote Zeev Schiff, a columnist for the Haaretz newspaper, "This is, of course, a clearly unfriendly act." U.S. officials have declined to comment.

However, the Washington Post reported in Friday's editions that FBI agents had begun surveillance of several high-ranking State Department officials and National Security Council staff in recent weeks.

The FBI has not determined whether anyone placed under surveillance acted improperly, but their names were placed on a list of possible suspects because of the access to certain information, the Post said. It did not name its sources, but said they were knowledgeable about the inquiry.

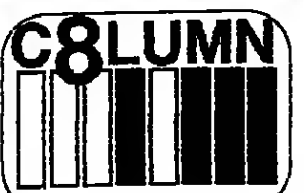
Intelligence gathering has been especially sensitive since former U.S. Navy analyst Jonathan Pollard was caught and convicted in 1985 of passing military secrets to Israel. Pollard is serving a life sentence, and although Israel has not publicly admitted employing him, its leaders have lobbied for his release.

Haaretz quoted a senior Israeli source as saying that if embassy phone calls were being tapped, Israel would view it severely and make a formal protest to the American government.

However, a source close to the intelligence community said in an interview that ever since the Pollard affair, Israel has been aware its lines are tapped. He spoke on condition of anonymity.

Yossi Melman, an Israeli journalist and intelligence expert, said that in any case, such tapping was "legal and clean."

Mr. Melman also noted that the United States has the technical capability to spy on Israel without direct human involvement — through satellites, for example — while Israel relies on lower-tech means.



Claudia Schiffer makes film debut at Cannes with 'Black Out'

CANNES (AFP) — Supermodel Claudia Schiffer made her film debut at the Cannes film festival, starring as a virginal young woman in "Black Out" directed by New York's Abel Ferrara.

"I wanted a small role for my movie debut because I don't have much experience," said Schiffer, who stars alongside Beatrice Dalle, Matthew Modine and Denis Hopper. "This is not a change of career," she said. "But if I had the opportunity to star in another film as good as this one, I would do it." In "Black Out," Schiffer plays the girlfriend of an actor, portrayed by Modine, who tries to crack a drug and alcohol addiction. Despite his new girlfriend, whom he compares to a health food shop, Modine's character cannot forget his previous girlfriend, played by Beatrice Dalle. Schiffer did not take any acting lessons for the film, on the orders of Ferrara.

Clint Eastwood shoots another film

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — U.S. actor-director Clint Eastwood started shooting his latest film, "Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil," starring Kevin Spacey, John Cusack and the director's own daughter, Allison Eastwood. The film, based on John Beren's novel with the same title, tells the story of two friends — a transvestite and a homosexual — faced with the death of a close friend.

Bruce Willis gives up on home town

NEW YORK (AFP) — While Bruce Willis, star of the movie "The Fifth Element," was in Cannes, residents of his hometown in New Jersey were accusing him of dashing their hopes. The New York Times reports that in 1995, Willis spent about \$1 million to buy a 4.4 hectare chunk of land in Penns Grove. Plans called for building a marina, a movie theatre and a hotel along the weedy, trash-filled riverfront property. But now the actor has reportedly lost interest and is preparing to put the land up for sale. Some town residents said they had been counting on the ambitious project to bring thousands of tourists to the area and reduce Penns Grove's 15 per cent unemployment rate.

Katherine Hepburn to turn 90

NEW YORK (AFP) — Hollywood legend Katherine Hepburn, whose tall, regal presence and tart tongue made her a movie favourite and four-time Oscar winner, celebrates her 90th birthday Monday. Quick, smart and snacking of class, she was not averse to scandal during her heyday in Hollywood when she was romantically linked to billionaire Howard Hughes and the married actor Spencer Tracy and director John Ford. The actress, whose last major hit was "On Golden Pond" in 1981, for which she won her last Oscar for best actress, had until recently been living in guarded privacy in New York City. A small garden not far from her New York home where she lived from 1932 to 1966 is to be named after her Monday. Suffering from Parkinson's disease, she returned to her family home in Connecticut last year.